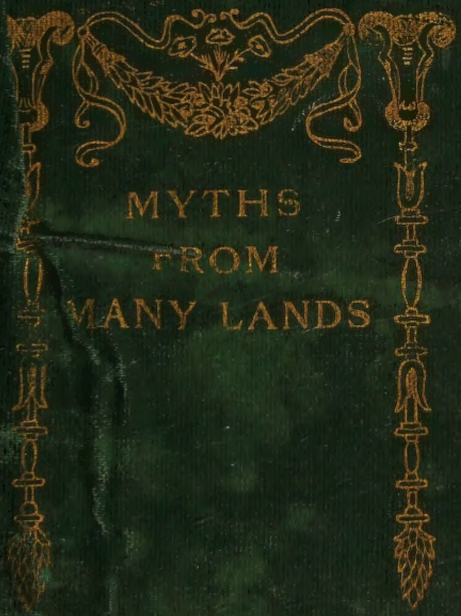
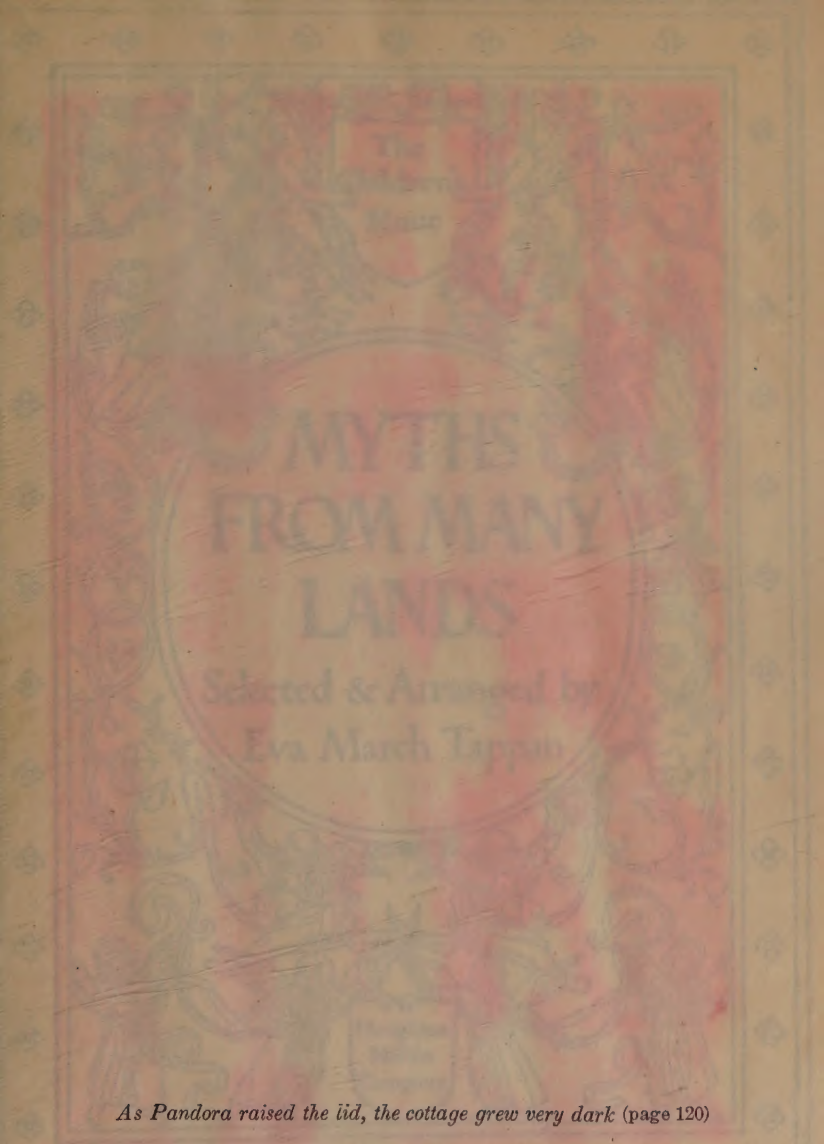

MYTHS
FROM
MANY LANDS

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

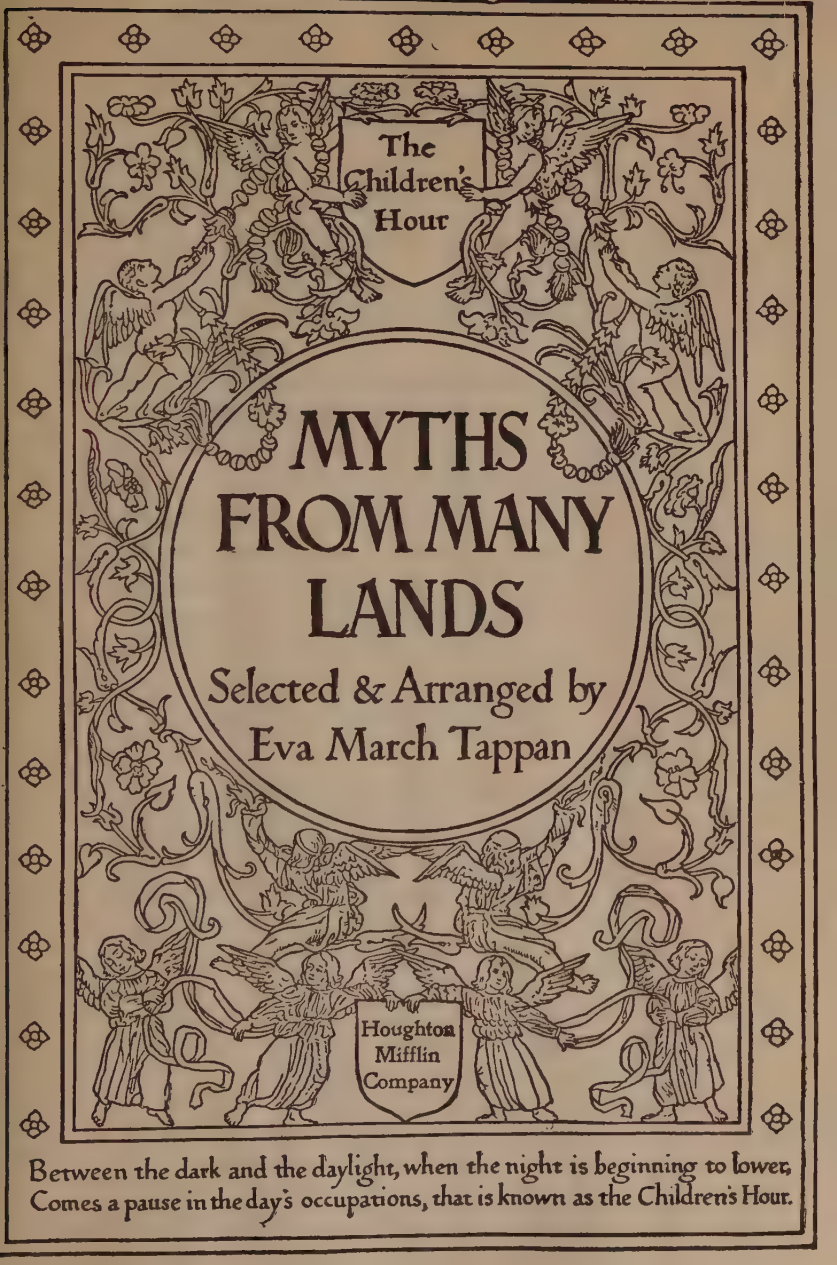
IN FIFTEEN VOLUMES

ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME II



As Pandora raised the lid, the cottage grew very dark (page 120)



Between the dark and the daylight, when the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations, that is known as the Children's Hour.

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both authors and publishers for the ready generosity
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lished by Houghton, Mifflin & Company.

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"Japan: in History, Folk-lore, and Art,"
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"Tales of Old Japan," by A. B. Mitford (
published by Macmillan & Company, Ltd.

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TO THE CHILDREN

IT was a long, long while ago, much longer ago than "Once upon a time," but even then there were people living on the earth. They must have thought it a strange place, for so many puzzling things were continually happening around them. There were no men wise enough to explain the mysteries, there were no books, there was not even an alphabet; and they had to imagine explanations as well as they could. One thing that especially interested them was the fact that in the morning a great yellow object slowly ascended the arch of the sky, and then descended on the farther side and went out of sight. No thing could do this of itself, they thought, and therefore they felt sure that some one was moving the object. They supposed that he was of course stronger and larger than they, and they believed that he must be exceedingly graceful and beautiful.

Sometimes they felt afraid of this sun god, for the rays were so fierce and burning that people sickened and died. "He is shooting his arrows at us," they said, as they hid away in terror. Oftener, however, they were glad to see the sun in the sky, not only because it gave them light and warmth, but because it ripened the fruits of the earth and prepared them to become food. "Now he is good to us," they said. "Let us give him sacrifices,

and perhaps he will not shoot us again with his terrible arrows."

After a while they came to believe that the sun was a great golden chariot, and that the sun god, or Apollo, — for by this time they had given him a name, — harnessed his fiery horses to it every morning and drove them across the sky. He was a skillful driver, and he knew how to guide his headstrong steeds up the sharp ascent. He could dash swiftly by the Bull and the Scorpion, and he could drive safely from the height of the heavens down the precipitous steep of the west.

But once there came a terribly hot summer. The leaves curled up, the fields were parched, the fruit shriveled and fell to the ground, the rivers became brooks, the brooks dried up and disappeared, forests burned, people sickened and perished. This was not difficult to explain. The driver of the chariot had not been Apollo, but some one else. Of course he would allow no one but his own son to take his place; but how did he happen to permit even this? It was easy to imagine that the son had persuaded his father to grant him a favor without telling what it was; and it had proved to be the privilege of driving the chariot. At last the fierce heat came to an end with thunder and lightning. They must be the weapons of a greater god than Apollo, thought the people. He had struck the young man with his thunderbolt, and the earth was saved. This is the story of Phaethon as it has come down to us; and we may be almost sure that it grew in some such fashion.

There were so many mysteries that gradually hundreds of these stories came into being, many of them

very poetical and beautiful. "The Sleeping Beauty," for instance, or "Briar Rose," as the Germans call it, is one that came from the change of seasons. The keen prick of the winter's cold stings the beauteous earth, and it seems to be dead. Frost and snow hide it from view. The trees and plants are at a standstill. Nothing grows, nothing changes. By and by comes the spring. The sun shines upon the icicles and the snow, and they melt away. Its warm, bright rays kiss the earth, and it awakens. The plants spring up, the trees put forth leaves, the flowers come into bloom, the birds sing, and all things are glad and happy.

Now it was easy to fancy the earth as a sleeping maiden, the sting of the frost as the sharp prick of a spindle, and the icicles as a hedge of thorns. The warm rays of the springtime sun became the kiss of the hero who had forced his way through the thorn hedge. We people of to-day know why the rays of the sun grow warmer in the spring, and we have all the other knowledge that the wise men have found out for us; but to the good folk who dwelt in the long ago and did not know why things happened, the story was no more marvelous than the happenings themselves. And, indeed, it is a greater wonder to see the earth come to life every spring than to see the awakening of a princess — if you only stop to think about it.

Myths are not only as old as the hills, — some of the hills, at least, — but they come from all over the world. It is not at all uncommon to find the same tale in two countries thousands of miles apart. The story of carrying water in a sieve is found in Greece, in Scandinavia,

and even in the American folklore of "Uncle Remus." Stories of one-eyed giants are found in Ireland, Greece, and Japan. Sometimes we find many different stories to account for the same fact. The early people of India believed that the moon went out of sight during an eclipse because it was swallowed by a dragon. The Japanese in like manner declared that when the sun disappeared it had hidden itself in a cave. In the first rays of ruddy light reaching up along the horizon at the dawning, the Greeks and Romans saw the rosy fingers of a beautiful goddess. The natives of some of the Pacific islands were not so poetical. They said that the dawning came because the darkness had been cut in two with a red knife.

These myths teach us much of the people who lived in the days before there was any written history, and, therefore, they are highly valued by learned students. They are so beautiful that they are loved by the poets; and they are so interesting and so different from other tales that no one can help liking to read them; and maybe that is the best use of them, after all, simply to read them and enjoy them and be glad that we have them.

E. M. T.

MYTHS OF GREECE AND ROME

THE PYGMIES

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

A GREAT while ago, when the world was full of wonders, there lived an earth-born Giant named Antæus, and a million or more of curious little earth-born people, who were called Pygmies. This Giant and these Pygmies, being children of the same mother (that is to say, our good old Grandmother Earth), were all brethren and dwelt together in a very friendly and affectionate manner, far, far off, in the middle of hot Africa. The Pygmies were so small, and there were so many sandy deserts and such high mountains between them and the rest of mankind, that nobody could get a peep at them oftener than once in a hundred years. As for the Giant, being of a very lofty stature, it was easy enough to see him, but safest to keep out of his sight.

Among the Pygmies, I suppose, if one of them grew to the height of six or eight inches, he was reckoned a prodigiously tall man. It must have been very pretty to behold their little cities, with streets two or three feet wide, paved with the smallest pebbles, and bordered by habitations about as big as a squirrel's cage. The king's palace attained to the stupendous magnitude of Periwinkle's baby-house, and stood in the centre of a spacious square, which could hardly have been covered by our hearth-rug. Their principal temple,

or cathedral, was as lofty as yonder bureau, and was looked upon as a wonderfully sublime and magnificent edifice. All these structures were built neither of stone nor wood. They were neatly plastered together by the Pygmy workmen, pretty much like birds'-nests, out of straw, feathers, eggshells, and other small bits of stuff, with stiff clay instead of mortar; and when the hot sun had dried them, they were just as snug and comfortable as a Pygmy could desire.

The country round about was conveniently laid out in fields, the largest of which was nearly of the same extent as one of Sweet Fern's flower-beds. Here the Pygmies used to plant wheat and other kinds of grain, which, when it grew up and ripened, overshadowed these tiny people, as the pines, and the oaks, and the walnut and chestnut-trees overshadow you and me, when we walk in our own tracts of woodland. At harvest-time, they were forced to go with their little axes and cut down the grain, exactly as a wood-cutter makes a clearing in the forest; and when a stalk of wheat, with its overburdened top, chanced to come crashing down upon an unfortunate Pygmy, it was apt to be a very sad affair. If it did not smash him all to pieces, at least, I am sure, it must have made the poor little fellow's head ache. And oh, my stars! if the fathers and mothers were so small, what must the children and babies have been? A whole family of them might have been put to bed in a shoe, or have crept into an old glove, and played at hide-and-seek in its thumb and fingers. You might have hidden a year-old baby under a thimble.

Now these funny Pygmies, as I told you before, had a Giant for their neighbor and brother, who was bigger, if possible, than they were little. He was so very tall that he carried a pine-tree, which was eight feet through the but, for a walking-stick. It took a far-sighted Pygmy, I can assure you, to discern his summit without the help of a telescope; and sometimes, in misty weather, they could not see his upper half, but only his long legs, which seemed to be striding about by themselves. But at noonday, in a clear atmosphere, when the sun shone brightly over him, the Giant Antæus presented a very grand spectacle. There he used to stand, a perfect mountain of a man, with his great countenance smiling down upon his little brothers, and his one vast eye (which was as big as a cart-wheel, and placed right in the centre of his forehead) giving a friendly wink to the whole nation at once.

The Pygmies loved to talk with Antæus; and fifty times a day, one or another of them would turn up his head, and shout through the hollow of his fists, "Halloo, brother Antæus! How are you, my good fellow?" and when the small, distant squeak of their voices reached his ear, the Giant would make answer, "Pretty well, brother Pygmy, I thank you," in a thunderous roar that would have shaken down the walls of their strongest temple, only that it came from so far aloft.

It was a happy circumstance that Antæus was the Pygmy people's friend; for there was more strength in his little finger than in ten million of such bodies as theirs. If he had been as ill-natured to them as he was to everybody else, he might have beaten down

their biggest city at one kick, and hardly have known that he did it. With the tornado of his breath, he could have stripped the roofs from a hundred dwellings, and sent thousands of the inhabitants whirling through the air. He might have set his immense foot upon a multitude; and when he took it up again, there would have been a pitiful sight, to be sure. But, being the son of Mother Earth, as they likewise were, the Giant gave them his brotherly kindness, and loved them with as big a love as it was possible to feel for creatures so very small. And, on their parts, the Pygmies loved Antæus with as much affection as their tiny hearts could hold. He was always ready to do them any good offices that lay in his power; as, for example, when they wanted a breeze to turn their windmills, the Giant would set all the sails a-going with the mere natural respiration of his lungs. When the sun was too hot, he often sat himself down, and let his shadow fall over the kingdom, from one frontier to the other; and as for matters in general, he was wise enough to let them alone, and leave the Pygmies to manage their own affairs, — which, after all, is about the best thing that great people can do for little ones.

In short, as I said before, Antæus loved the Pygmies, and the Pygmies loved Antæus. The Giant's life being as long as his body was large, while the lifetime of a Pygmy was but a span, this friendly intercourse had been going on for innumerable generations and ages. It was written about in the Pygmy histories, and talked about in their ancient traditions. The most venerable and white-bearded Pygmy had

never heard of a time, even in his greatest of grandfather's days, when the Giant was not their enormous friend. Once, to be sure (as was recorded on an obelisk, three feet high, erected on the place of the catastrophe), Antæus sat down upon about five thousand Pygmies, who were assembled at a military review. But this was one of those unlucky accidents for which nobody is to blame; so that the small folks never took it to heart, and only requested the Giant to be careful forever afterwards to examine the acre of ground where he intended to squat himself.

It is a very pleasant picture to imagine Antæus standing among the Pygmies, like the spire of the tallest cathedral that ever was built, while they ran about like pismires at his feet; and to think that, in spite of their difference in size, there were affection and sympathy between them and him! Indeed, it has always seemed to me that the Giant needed the little people more than the Pygmies needed the Giant. For, unless they had been his neighbors and well-wishers, and, as we may say, his playfellows, Antæus would not have had a single friend in the world. No other being like himself had ever been created. No creature of his own size had ever talked with him, in thunder-like accents, face to face. When he stood with his head among the clouds, he was quite alone, and had been so for hundreds of years, and would be so forever. Even if he had met another Giant, Antæus would have fancied the world not big enough for two such vast personages, and, instead of being friends with him, would have fought him till one of the two was killed.

But with the Pygmies he was the most sportive, and humorous, and merry-hearted, and sweet-tempered old Giant that ever washed his face in a wet cloud.

His little friends, like all other small people, had a great opinion of their own importance, and used to assume quite a patronizing air towards the Giant.

"Poor creature!" they said one to another. "He has a very dull time of it, all by himself; and we ought not to grudge wasting a little of our precious time to amuse him. He is not half so bright as we are, to be sure; and, for that reason, he needs us to look after his comfort and happiness. Let us be kind to the old fellow. Why, if Mother Earth had not been very kind to ourselves, we might all have been Giants too."

On all their holidays, the Pygmies had excellent sport with Antæus. He often stretched himself out at full length on the ground, where he looked like the long ridge of a hill; and it was a good hour's walk, no doubt, for a short-legged Pygmy to journey from head to foot of the Giant. He would lay down his great hand flat on the grass, and challenge the tallest of them to clamber upon it, and straddle from finger to finger. So fearless were they, that they made nothing of creeping in among the folds of his garments. When his head lay sidewise on the earth, they would march boldly up, and peep into the great cavern of his mouth, and take it all as a joke (as indeed it was meant) when Antæus gave a sudden snap with his jaws, as if he were going to swallow fifty of them at once. You would have laughed to see the children dodging in and out among his hair, or swinging from his beard. It is impossible

to tell half of the funny tricks that they played with their huge comrade; but I do not know that anything was more curious than when a party of boys were seen running races on his forehead, to try which of them could get first round the circle of his one great eye. It was another favorite feat with them to march along the bridge of his nose, and jump down upon his upper lip.

If the truth must be told, they were sometimes as troublesome to the Giant as a swarm of ants or mosquitoes, especially as they had a fondness for mischief, and liked to prick his skin with their little swords and lances, to see how thick and tough it was. But Antæus took it all kindly enough; although, once in a while, when he happened to be sleepy, he would grumble out a peevish word or two, like the muttering of a tempest, and ask them to have done with their nonsense. A great deal oftener, however, he watched their merriment and gambols until his huge, heavy, clumsy wits were completely stirred up by them; and then would he roar out such a tremendous volume of immeasurable laughter, that the whole nation of Pygmies had to put their hands to their ears, else it would certainly have deafened them.

"Ho! ho! ho!" quoth the Giant, shaking his mountainous sides. "What a funny thing it is to be little! If I were not Antæus, I should like to be a Pygmy, just for the joke's sake."

The Pygmies had but one thing to trouble them in the world. They were constantly at war with the cranes, and had always been so, ever since the long-

lived giant could remember. From time to time very terrible battles had been fought, in which sometimes the little men won the victory, and sometimes the cranes. According to some historians, the Pygmies used to go to the battle, mounted on the backs of goats and rams; but such animals as these must have been far too big for Pygmies to ride upon; so that, I rather suppose, they rode on squirrel-back, or rabbit-back, or rat-back, or perhaps got upon hedgehogs, whose prickly quills would be very terrible to the enemy. However this might be, and whatever creatures the Pygmies rode upon, I do not doubt that they made a formidable appearance, armed with sword and spear, and bow and arrow, blowing their tiny trumpet, and shouting their little war-cry. They never failed to exhort one another to fight bravely, and recollect that the world had its eyes upon them; although, in simple truth, the only spectator was the Giant Antæus, with his one, great, stupid eye, in the middle of his forehead.

When the two armies joined battle, the cranes would rush forward, flapping their wings and stretching out their necks, and would perhaps snatch up some of the Pygmies crosswise in their beaks. Whenever this happened, it was truly an awful spectacle to see those little men of might kicking and sprawling in the air, and at last disappearing down the crane's long, crooked throat, swallowed up alive. A hero, you know, must hold himself in readiness for any kind of fate; and doubtless the glory of the thing was a consolation to him, even in the crane's gizzard. If Antæus observed

that the battle was going hard against his little allies, he generally stopped laughing, and ran with mile-long strides to their assistance, flourishing his club aloft and shouting at the cranes, who quacked and croaked, and retreated as fast as they could. Then the Pygmy army would march homeward in triumph, attributing the victory entirely to their own valor, and to the warlike skill and strategy of whosoever happened to be captain-general; and for a tedious while afterwards, nothing would be heard of but grand processions, and public banquets, and brilliant illuminations, and shows of waxwork, with likenesses of the distinguished officers as small as life.

In the above-described warfare, if a Pygmy chanced to pluck out a crane's tail-feather, it proved a very great feather in his cap. Once or twice, if you will believe me, a little man was made chief ruler of the nation for no other merit in the world than bringing home such a feather.

But I have now said enough to let you see what a gallant little people these were, and how happily they and their forefathers, for nobody knows how many generations, had lived with the immeasurable Giant Antæus. In the remaining part of the story, I shall tell you of a far more astonishing battle than any that was fought between the Pygmies and the cranes.

One day the mighty Antæus was lolling at full length among his little friends. His pine-tree walking-stick lay on the ground close by his side. His head was in one part of the kingdom, and his feet extended across the boundaries of another part; and he was

taking whatever comfort he could get, while the Pygmies scrambled over him, and peeped into his cavernous mouth, and played among his hair. Sometimes, for a minute or two, the Giant dropped asleep, and snored like the rush of a whirlwind. During one of these little bits of slumber, a Pygmy chanced to climb upon his shoulder, and took a view around the horizon, as from the summit of a hill; and he beheld something, a long way off, which made him rub the bright specks of his eyes, and look sharper than before. At first he mistook it for a mountain, and wondered how it had grown up so suddenly out of the earth. But soon he saw the mountain move. As it came nearer and nearer, what should it turn out to be but a human shape, not so big as Antæus, it is true, although a very enormous figure, in comparison with Pygmies, and a vast deal bigger than the men whom we see nowadays.

When the Pygmy was quite satisfied that his eyes had not deceived him, he scampered, as fast as his legs would carry him, to the Giant's ear, and stooping over its cavity, shouted lustily into it, —

"Halloo, brother Antæus! Get up this minute, and take your pine-tree walking-stick in your hand. Here comes another Giant to have a tussle with you."

"Poh, poh!" grumbled Antæus, only half awake. "None of your nonsense, my little fellow! Don't you see I'm sleepy? There is not a Giant on earth for whom I would take the trouble to get up."

But the Pygmy looked again, and now perceived that the stranger was coming directly towards the

prostrate form of Antæus. With every step he looked less like a blue mountain, and more like an immensely large man. He was soon so high, that there could be no possible mistake about the matter. There he was, with the sun flaming on his golden helmet, and flashing from his polished breastplate; he had a sword by his side, and a lion's skin over his back, and on his right shoulder he carried a club, which looked bulkier and heavier than the pine-tree walking-stick of Antæus.

By this time, the whole nation of Pygmies had seen the new wonder, and a million of them set up a shout, all together, so that it really made quite an audible squeak.

"Get up, Antæus! Bestir yourself, you lazy old Giant! Here comes another Giant, as strong as you are, to fight with you!"

"Nonsense, nonsense!" growled the sleepy Giant. "I'll have my nap out, come who may."

Still the stranger drew nearer; and now the Pygmies could plainly discern that, if his stature were less lofty than the Giant's, yet his shoulders were even broader. And, in truth, what a pair of shoulders they must have been! As I told you, a long while ago, they once upheld the sky. The Pygmies, being ten times as vivacious as their great numskull of a brother, could not abide the Giant's slow movements, and were determined to have him on his feet. So they kept shouting to him, and even went so far as to prick him with their swords.

"Get up, get up, get up!" they cried. "Up with

you, lazy bones! The strange Giant's club is bigger than your own, his shoulders are the broadest, and we think him the stronger of the two."

Antæus could not endure to have it said that any mortal was half so mighty as himself. This latter remark of the Pygmies pricked him deeper than their swords; and, sitting up, in rather a sulky humor, he gave a gape of several yards wide, rubbed his eye, and finally turned his stupid head in the direction whither his little friends were eagerly pointing.

No sooner did he set eyes on the stranger than, leaping on his feet, and seizing his walking-stick, he strode a mile or two to meet him; all the while brandishing the sturdy pine-tree, so that it whistled through the air.

"Who are you?" thundered the Giant. "And what do you want in my dominions?"

There was one strange thing about Antæus, of which I have not yet told you, lest, hearing of so many wonders all in a lump, you might not believe much more than half of them. You are to know, then, that whenever this redoubtable Giant touched the ground, either with his hand, his foot, or any other part of his body, he grew stronger than ever he had been before. The Earth, you remember, was his mother, and was very fond of him, as being almost the biggest of her children; and so she took this method of keeping him always in full vigor. Some persons affirm that he grew ten times stronger at every touch; others say that it was only twice as strong. But only think of it! Whenever Antæus took a walk, supposing it were but ten

"WHO ARE YOU," THUNDERED THE GIANT

miles, and that he stepped a hundred yards at a stride, you may try to cipher out how much mightier he was, on sitting down again, than when he first started. And whenever he flung himself on the earth to take a little repose, even if he got up the very next instant, he would be as strong as exactly ten just such giants as his former self. It was well for the world that Antæus happened to be of a sluggish disposition, and liked ease better than exercise; for, if he had frisked about like the Pygmies, and touched the earth as often as they did, he would long ago have been strong enough to pull down the sky about people's ears. But these great lubberly fellows resemble mountains, not only in bulk, but in their disinclination to move.

Any other mortal man, except the very one whom Antæus had now encountered, would have been half frightened to death by the Giant's ferocious aspect and terrible voice. But the stranger did not seem at all disturbed. He carelessly lifted his club, and balanced it in his hand, measuring Antæus with his eye from head to foot, not as if wonder-smitten at his stature, but as if he had seen a great many Giants before, and this was by no means the biggest of them. In fact, if the Giant had been no bigger than the Pygmies (who stood pricking up their ears, and looking and listening to what was going forward), the stranger could not have been less afraid of him.

"Who are you, I say?" roared Antæus again. "What's your name? Why do you come hither? Speak, you vagabond, or I'll try the thickness of your skull with my walking-stick."

"You are a very discourteous Giant," answered the stranger, quietly, "and I shall probably have to teach you a little civility, before we part. As for my name, it is Hercules. I have come hither because this is my most convenient road to the garden of the Hesperides, whither I am going to get three of the golden apples for King Eurystheus."

"Caitiff, you shall go no farther!" bellowed Antæus, putting on a grimmer look than before; for he had heard of the mighty Hercules, and hated him because he was said to be so strong. "Neither shall you go back whence you came!"

"How will you prevent me," asked Hercules, "from going whither I please?"

"By hitting you a rap with this pine-tree here," shouted Antæus, scowling so that he made himself the ugliest monster in Africa. "I am fifty times stronger than you; and, now that I stamp my foot upon the ground, I am five hundred times stronger! I am ashamed to kill such a puny little dwarf as you seem to be. I will make a slave of you, and you shall likewise be the slave of my brethren, here, the Pygmies. So throw down your club and your other weapons; and as for that lion's skin, I intend to have a pair of gloves made of it."

"Come and take it off my shoulders, then," answered Hercules, lifting his club.

Then the Giant, grinning with rage, strode tower-like towards the stranger (ten times strengthened at every step), and fetched a monstrous blow at him with his pine-tree, which Hercules caught upon his club;

and being more skilful than Antæus, he paid him back such a rap upon the sconce, that down tumbled the great lumbering man-mountain, flat upon the ground. The poor little Pygmies (who really never dreamed that anybody in the world was half so strong as their brother Antæus) were a good deal dismayed at this. But no sooner was the Giant down, than up he bounced again, with tenfold might, and such a furious visage as was horrible to behold. He aimed another blow at Hercules, but struck awry, being blinded with wrath, and only hit his poor, innocent Mother Earth, who groaned and trembled at the stroke. His pine-tree went so deep into the ground, and stuck there so fast, that before Antæus could get it out, Hercules brought down his club across his shoulders with a mighty thwack, which made the Giant roar as if all sorts of intolerable noises had come screeching and rumbling out of his immeasurable lungs in that one cry. Away it went over mountains and valleys, and, for aught I know, was heard on the other side of the African deserts.

As for the Pygmies, their capital city was laid in ruins by the concussion and vibration of the air; and, though there was uproar enough without their help, they all set up a shriek out of three millions of little throats, fancying, no doubt, that they swelled the Giant's bellow by at least ten times as much. Meanwhile, Antæus had scrambled upon his feet again, and pulled his pine-tree out of the earth; and, all a-flame with fury, and more outrageously strong than ever, he ran at Hercules, and brought down another blow.

"This time, rascal," shouted he, "you shall not escape me."

But once more Hercules warded off the stroke with his club, and the Giant's pine-tree was shattered into a thousand splinters, most of which flew among the Pygmies, and did them more mischief than I like to think about. Before Antæus could get out of the way, Hercules let drive again, and gave him another knock-down blow, which sent him heels over head, but served only to increase his already enormous and insufferable strength. As for his rage, there is no telling what a fiery furnace it had now got to be. His one eye was nothing but a circle of red flame. Having now no weapons but his fists, he doubled them up (each bigger than a hogshead), smote one against the other, and danced up and down with absolute frenzy, flourishing his immense arms about, as if he meant not merely to kill Hercules, but to smash the whole world to pieces.

"Come on!" roared this thundering Giant. "Let me hit you but one box on the ear, and you'll never have the headache again."

Now Hercules (though strong enough, as you already know, to hold the sky up) began to be sensible that he should never win the victory, if he kept on knocking Antæus down; for, by and by, if he hit him such hard blows, the Giant would inevitably, by the help of his Mother Earth, become stronger than the mighty Hercules himself. So, throwing down his club, with which he had fought so many dreadful battles, the hero stood ready to receive his antagonist with naked arms.

"Step forward," cried he. "Since I've broken your pine-tree, we'll try which is the better man at a wrestling-match."

"Aha! then I'll soon satisfy you," shouted the Giant; for, if there was one thing on which he prided himself more than another, it was his skill in wrestling. "Villain, I'll fling you where you can never pick yourself up again."

On came Antæus, hopping and capering with the scorching heat of his rage, and getting new vigor wherewith to wreak his passion, every time he hopped. But Hercules, you must understand, was wiser than this numskull of a Giant, and had thought of a way to fight him, — huge, earth-born monster that he was, — and to conquer him too, in spite of all that his Mother Earth could do for him. Watching his opportunity, as the mad Giant made a rush at him, Hercules caught him round the middle with both hands, lifted him high into the air, and held him aloft overhead.

Just imagine it, my dear little friends! What a spectacle it must have been, to see this monstrous fellow sprawling in the air, face downward, kicking out his long legs and wriggling his whole vast body, like a baby when its father holds it at arm's-length towards the ceiling.

But the most wonderful thing was, that, as soon as Antæus was fairly off the earth, he began to lose the vigor which he had gained by touching it. Hercules very soon perceived that his troublesome enemy was growing weaker, both because he struggled and kicked with less violence, and because the thunder of his big

voice subsided into a grumble. The truth was, that, unless the Giant touched Mother Earth as often as once in five minutes, not only his overgrown strength, but the very breath of his life, would depart from him. Hercules had guessed this secret; and it may be well for us all to remember it, in case we should ever have to fight a battle with a fellow like Antæus. For these earth-born creatures are only difficult to conquer on their own ground, but may easily be managed if we can contrive to lift them into a loftier and purer region. So it proved with the poor Giant, whom I am really a little sorry for, notwithstanding his uncivil way of treating strangers who came to visit him.

When his strength and breath were quite gone Hercules gave his huge body a toss, and flung it about a mile off, where it fell heavily, and lay with no more motion than a sand-hill. It was too late for the Giant's Mother Earth to help him now; and I should not wonder if his ponderous bones were lying on the same spot to this very day, and were mistaken for those of an uncommonly large elephant.

But, alas me! What a wailing did the poor little Pygmies set up when they saw their enormous brother treated in this terrible manner! If Hercules heard their shrieks, however, he took no notice, and perhaps fancied them only the shrill, plaintive twittering of small birds that had been frightened from their nests by the uproar of the battle between himself and Antæus. Indeed, his thoughts had been so much taken up with the Giant, that he had never once looked at the Pygmies, nor even knew that there was such a

funny little nation in the world. And now, as he had travelled a good way, and was also rather weary with his exertions in the fight, he spread out his lion's skin on the ground, and reclining himself upon it, fell fast asleep.

As soon as the Pygmies saw Hercules preparing for a nap, they nodded their little heads at one another, and winked with their little eyes. And when his deep, regular breathing gave them notice that he was asleep, they assembled together in an immense crowd, spreading over a space of about twenty-seven feet square. One of their most eloquent orators (and a valiant warrior enough, besides, though hardly so good at any other weapon as he was with his tongue) climbed upon a toadstool, and, from that elevated position, addressed the multitude. His sentiments were pretty much as follows; or, at all events, something like this was probably the upshot of his speech: —

"Tall Pygmies and mighty little men! You and all of us have seen what a public calamity has been brought to pass, and what an insult has here been offered to the majesty of our nation. Yonder lies Antæus, our great friend and brother, slain, within our territory, by a miscreant who took him at disadvantage, and fought him (if fighting it can be called) in a way that neither man, nor Giant, nor Pygmy ever dreamed of fighting until this hour. And, adding a grievous contumely to the wrong already done us, the miscreant has now fallen asleep as quietly as if nothing were to be dreaded from our wrath! It behooves you, fellow-countrymen, to consider in what aspect

we shall stand before the world, and what will be the verdict of impartial history, should we suffer these accumulated outrages to go unavenged.

"Antæus was our brother, born of that same beloved parent to whom we owe the thews and sinews, as well as the courageous hearts, which made him proud of our relationship. He was our faithful ally, and fell fighting as much for our national rights and immunities as for his own personal ones. We and our forefathers have dwelt in friendship with him, and held affectionate intercourse, as man to man, through immemorial generations. You remember how often our entire people have reposed in his great shadow, and how our little ones have played at hide-and-seek in the tangles of his hair, and how his mighty footsteps have familiarly gone to and fro among us, and never trodden upon any of our toes. And there lies this dear brother, — this sweet and amiable friend, — this brave and faithful ally, — this virtuous Giant, — this blameless and excellent Antæus, — dead! Dead! Silent! Powerless! A mere mountain of clay! Forgive my tears! Nay, I behold your own! Were we to drown the world with them, could the world blame us?

"But to resume: Shall we, my countrymen, suffer this wicked stranger to depart unharmed, and triumph in his treacherous victory, among distant communities of the earth? Shall we not rather compel him to leave his bones here on our soil, by the side of our slain brother's bones, so that, while one skeleton shall remain as the everlasting monument of our sorrow, the other shall endure as long, exhibiting to the whole

human race a terrible example of Pygmy vengeance? Such is the question. I put it to you in full confidence of a response that shall be worthy of our national character, and calculated to increase, rather than diminish, the glory which our ancestors have transmitted to us, and which we ourselves have proudly vindicated in our warfare with the cranes."

The orator was here interrupted by a burst of irrepressible enthusiasm; every individual Pygmy crying out that the national honor must be preserved at all hazards. He bowed, and making a gesture for silence, wound up his harangue in the following admirable manner: —

"It only remains for us, then, to decide whether we shall carry on the war in our national capacity, — one united people against a common enemy, — or whether some champion, famous in former fights, shall be selected to defy the slayer of our brother Antæus to single combat. In the latter case, though not unconscious that there may be taller men among you, I hereby offer myself for that enviable duty. And, believe me, dear countrymen, whether I live or die, the honor of this great country, and the fame bequeathed us by our heroic progenitors, shall suffer no diminution in my hands. Never, while I can wield this sword, of which I now fling away the scabbard, — never, never, never, even if the crimson hand that slew the great Antæus shall lay me prostrate, like him, on the soil which I give my life to defend."

So saying, this valiant Pygmy drew out his weapon (which was terrible to behold, being as long as the

blade of a penknife), and sent the scabbard whirling over the heads of the multitude. His speech was followed by an uproar of applause, as its patriotism and self-devotion unquestionably deserved; and the shouts and clapping of hands would have been greatly prolonged had they not been rendered quite inaudible by a deep respiration, vulgarly called a snore, from the sleeping Hercules.

It was finally decided that the whole nation of Pygmies should set to work to destroy Hercules; not, be it understood, from any doubt that a single champion would be capable of putting him to the sword, but because he was a public enemy, and all were desirous of sharing in the glory of his defeat. There was a debate whether the national honor did not demand that a herald should be sent with a trumpet, to stand over the ear of Hercules, and, after blowing a blast right into it, to defy him to the combat by formal proclamation. But two or three venerable and sagacious Pygmies, well versed in state affairs, gave it as their opinion that war already existed, and that it was their rightful privilege to take the enemy by surprise. Moreover, if awakened, and allowed to get upon his feet, Hercules might happen to do them a mischief before he could be beaten down again. For, as these sage counsellors remarked, the stranger's club was really very big, and had rattled like a thunderbolt against the skull of Antæus. So the Pygmies resolved to set aside all foolish punctilios, and assail their antagonist at once.

Accordingly, all the fighting men of the nation took

their weapons, and went boldly up to Hercules, who still lay fast asleep, little dreaming of the harm which the Pygmies meant to do him. A body of twenty thousand archers marched in front, with their little bows all ready, and the arrows on the string. The same number were ordered to clamber upon Hercules, some with spades to dig his eyes out, and others with bundles of hay, and all manner of rubbish, with which they intended to plug up his mouth and nostrils, so that he might perish for lack of breath. These last, however, could by no means perform their appointed duty; inasmuch as the enemy's breath rushed out of his nose in an obstreperous hurricane and whirlwind, which blew the Pygmies away as fast as they came nigh. It was found necessary, therefore, to hit upon some other method of carrying on the war.

After holding a council, the captains ordered their troops to collect sticks, straws, dry weeds, and whatever combustible stuff they could find, and make a pile of it, heaping it high around the head of Hercules. As a great many thousand Pygmies were employed in this task, they soon brought together several bushels of inflammatory matter, and raised so tall a heap, that, mounting on its summit, they were quite upon a level with the sleeper's face. The archers, meanwhile, were stationed within bow-shot, with orders to let fly at Hercules the instant that he stirred. Everything being in readiness, a torch was applied to the pile, which immediately burst into flames, and soon waxed hot enough to roast the enemy, had he but chosen to lie still. A Pygmy, you know, though so very small, might

set the world on fire, just as easily as a Giant could; so that this was certainly the very best way of dealing with their foe, provided they could have kept him quiet while the conflagration was going forward.

But no sooner did Hercules begin to be scorched, than up he started, with his hair in a red blaze.

"What's all this?" he cried, bewildered with sleep, and staring about him as if he expected to see another Giant.

At that moment the twenty thousand archers twanged their bowstrings, and the arrows came whizzing, like so many winged mosquitoes, right into the face of Hercules. But I doubt whether more than half a dozen of them punctured the skin, which was remarkably tough, as you know the skin of a hero has good need to be.

"Villain!" shouted all the Pygmies at once. "You have killed the Giant Antæus, our great brother, and the ally of our nation. We declare bloody war against you and will slay you on the spot."

Surprised at the shrill piping of so many little voices, Hercules, after putting out the conflagration of his hair, gazed all round about, but could see nothing. At last, however, looking narrowly on the ground, he espied the innumerable assemblage of Pygmies at his feet. He stooped down, and taking up the nearest one between his thumb and finger, set him on the palm of his left hand, and held him at a proper distance for examination. It chanced to be the very identical Pygmy who had spoken from the top of the toadstool, and had offered himself as a champion to meet Hercules in single combat.

"What in the world, my little fellow," ejaculated Hercules, "may you be?"

"I am your enemy," answered the valiant Pygmy, in his mightiest squeak. "You have slain the enormous Antæus, our brother by the mother's side, and for ages the faithful ally of our illustrious nation. We are determined to put you to death; and for my own part, I challenge you to instant battle, on equal ground."

Hercules was so tickled with the Pygmy's big words and warlike gestures, that he burst into a great explosion of laughter, and almost dropped the poor little mite of a creature off the palm of his hand, through the ecstasy and convulsion of his merriment.

"Upon my word," cried he, "I thought I had seen wonders before to-day, — hydras with nine heads, stags with golden horns, six-legged men, three-headed dogs, giants with furnaces in their stomachs, and nobody knows what besides. But here, on the palm of my hand, stands a wonder that outdoes them all! Your body, my little friend, is about the size of an ordinary man's finger. Pray, how big may your soul be?"

"As big as your own!" said the Pygmy.

Hercules was touched with the little man's dauntless courage, and could not help acknowledging such a brotherhood with him as one hero feels for another.

"My good little people," said he, making a low obeisance to the grand nation, "not for all the world would I do an intentional injury to such brave fellows as you! Your hearts seem to me so exceedingly great, that, upon my honor, I marvel how your small bodies can contain them. I sue for peace, and, as a condition of

it, will take five strides and be out of your kingdom at the sixth. Good-by. I shall pick my steps carefully, for fear of treading upon some fifty of you, without knowing it. Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! For once, Hercules acknowledges himself vanquished."

Some writers say, that Hercules gathered up the whole race of Pygmies in his lion's skin, and carried them home to Greece, for the children of King Eurystheus to play with. But this is a mistake. He left them, one and all, within their own territory, where, for aught I can tell, their descendants are alive to the present day, building their little houses, cultivating their little fields, spanking their little children, waging their little warfare with the cranes, doing their little business, whatever it may be, and reading their little histories of ancient times. In those histories, perhaps, it stands recorded, that, a great many centuries ago, the valiant Pygmies avenged the death of the Giant Antæus by scaring away the mighty Hercules.

THE GORGON'S HEAD

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

PERSEUS was the son of Danaë, who was the daughter of a king. And when Perseus was a very little boy, some wicked people put his mother and himself into a chest, and set them afloat upon the sea. The wind blew freshly, and drove the chest away from the shore, and the uneasy billows tossed it up and down; while Danaë clasped her child closely to her bosom, and dreaded that some big wave would dash its foamy crest over them both. The chest sailed on, however, and neither sank nor was upset; until, when night was coming, it floated so near an island that it got entangled in a fisherman's nets, and was drawn out high and dry upon the sand. The island was called Seriphus, and it was reigned over by King Polydectes, who happened to be the fisherman's brother.

This fisherman, I am glad to tell you, was an exceedingly humane and upright man. He showed great kindness to Danaë and her little boy; and continued to befriend them, until Perseus had grown to be a handsome youth, very strong and active, and skilful in the use of arms. Long before this time, King Polydectes had seen the two strangers — the mother and her child — who had come to his dominions in a floating chest. As he was not good and kind, like his brother

the fisherman, but extremely wicked, he resolved to send Perseus on a dangerous enterprise, in which he would probably be killed, and then to do some great mischief to Danaë herself. So this bad-hearted king spent a long while in considering what was the most dangerous thing that a young man could possibly undertake to perform. At last, having hit upon an enterprise that promised to turn out as fatally as he desired, he sent for the youthful Perseus.

The young man came to the palace, and found the king sitting upon his throne.

"Perseus," said King Polydectes, smiling craftily upon him, "you are grown up a fine young man. You and your good mother have received a great deal of kindness from myself, as well as from my worthy brother the fisherman, and I suppose you would not be sorry to repay some of it."

"Please your Majesty," answered Perseus, "I would willingly risk my life to do so."

"Well, then," continued the king, still with a cunning smile on his lips, "I have a little adventure to propose to you; and, as you are a brave and enterprising youth, you will doubtless look upon it as a great piece of good luck to have so rare an opportunity of distinguishing yourself. You must know, my good Perseus, I think of getting married to the beautiful Princess Hippodamia; and it is customary, on these occasions, to make the bride a present of some far-fetched and elegant curiosity. I have been a little perplexed, I must honestly confess, where to obtain anything likely to please a princess of her exquisite

taste. But, this morning, I flatter myself, I have thought of precisely the article."

"And can I assist your Majesty in obtaining it?" cried Perseus eagerly.

"You can, if you are as brave a youth as I believe you to be," replied King Polydectes, with the utmost graciousness of manner. "The bridal gift which I have set my heart on presenting to the beautiful Hippodamia is the head of the Gorgon Medusa with the snaky locks; and I depend on you, my dear Perseus, to bring it to me. So, as I am anxious to settle affairs with the princess, the sooner you go in quest of the Gorgon, the better I shall be pleased."

"I will set out to-morrow morning," answered Perseus.

"Pray do so, my gallant youth," rejoined the king. "And, Perseus, in cutting off the Gorgon's head, be careful to make a clean stroke, so as not to injure its appearance. You must bring it home in the very best condition, in order to suit the exquisite taste of the beautiful Princess Hippodamia."

Perseus left the palace, but was scarcely out of hearing before Polydectes burst into a laugh; being greatly amused, wicked king that he was, to find how readily the young man fell into the snare. The news quickly spread abroad that Perseus had undertaken to cut off the head of Medusa with the snaky locks. Everybody was rejoiced; for most of the inhabitants of the island were as wicked as the king himself, and would have liked nothing better than to see some enormous mischief happen to Danaë and her son. The only good

man in this unfortunate island of Seriphus appears to have been the fisherman. As Perseus walked along, therefore, the people pointed after him, and made mouths, and winked to one another, and ridiculed him as loudly as they dared.

"Ho, ho!" cried they; "Medusa's snakes will sting him soundly!"

Now, there were three Gorgons alive at that period; and they were the most strange and terrible monsters that had ever been since the world was made, or that have been seen in after days, or that are likely to be seen in all time to come. I hardly know what sort of creature or hobgoblin to call them. They were three sisters, and seem to have borne some distant resemblance to women, but were really a very frightful and mischievous species of dragon. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine what hideous beings these three sisters were. Why, instead of locks of hair, if you can believe me, they had each of them a hundred enormous snakes growing on their heads, all alive, twisting, wriggling, curling, and thrusting out their venomous tongues, with forked stings at the end! The teeth of the Gorgons were terribly long tusks; their hands were made of brass; and their bodies were all over scales, which, if not iron, were something as hard and impenetrable. They had wings, too, and exceedingly splendid ones, I can assure you; for every feather in them was pure, bright, glittering, burnished gold, and they looked very dazzlingly, no doubt, when the Gorgons were flying about in the sunshine.

But when people happened to catch a glimpse of

their glittering brightness, aloft in the air, they seldom stopped to gaze, but ran and hid themselves as speedily as they could. You will think, perhaps, that they were afraid of being stung by the serpents that served the Gorgons instead of hair, — or of having their heads bitten off by their ugly tusks, — or of being torn all to pieces by their brazen claws. Well, to be sure, these were some of the dangers, but by no means the greatest, nor the most difficult to avoid. For the worst thing about these abominable Gorgons was, that, if once a poor mortal fixed his eyes full upon one of their faces, he was certain, that very instant, to be changed from warm flesh and blood into cold and lifeless stone!

Thus, as you will easily perceive, it was a very dangerous adventure that the wicked King Polydectes had contrived for this innocent young man. Perseus himself, when he had thought over the matter, could not help seeing that he had very little chance of coming safely through it, and that he was far more likely to become a stone image than to bring back the head of Medusa with the snaky locks. For, not to speak of other difficulties, there was one which it would have puzzled an older man than Perseus to get over. Not only must he fight with and slay this golden-winged, iron-scaled, long-tusked, brazen-clawed, snaky-haired monster, but he must do it with his eyes shut, or, at least, without so much as a glance at the enemy with whom he was contending. Else, while his arm was lifted to strike, he would stiffen into stone, and stand with that uplifted arm for centuries, until time, and

the wind and weather, should crumble him quite away. This would be a very sad thing to befall a young man who wanted to perform a great many brave deeds, and to enjoy a great deal of happiness, in this bright and beautiful world.

So disconsolate did these thoughts make him, that Perseus could not bear to tell his mother what he had undertaken to do. He therefore took his shield, girded on his sword, and crossed over from the island to the mainland, where he sat down in a solitary place, and hardly refrained from shedding tears.

But, while he was in this sorrowful mood, he heard a voice close beside him.

"Perseus," said the voice, "why are you sad?"

He lifted his head from his hands, in which he had hidden it, and, behold! all alone as Perseus had supposed himself to be, there was a stranger in the solitary place. It was a brisk, intelligent, and remarkably shrewd-looking young man, with a cloak over his shoulders, an odd sort of cap on his head, a strangely twisted staff in his hand, and a short and very crooked sword hanging by his side. He was exceedingly light and active in his figure, like a person much accustomed to gymnastic exercises, and well able to leap or run. Above all, the stranger had such a cheerful, knowing, and helpful aspect (though it was certainly a little mischievous, into the bargain), that Perseus could not help feeling his spirits grow livelier as he gazed at him. Besides, being really a courageous youth, he felt greatly ashamed that anybody should have found him with tears in his eyes, like a timid little school-boy.

when, after all, there might be no occasion for despair. So Perseus wiped his eyes, and answered the stranger pretty briskly, putting on as brave a look as he could.

"I am not so very sad," said he, "only thoughtful about an adventure that I have undertaken."

"Oho!" answered the stranger. "Well, tell me all about it, and possibly I may be of service to you. I have helped a good many young men through adventures that looked difficult enough beforehand. Perhaps you may have heard of me. I have more names than one; but the name of Quicksilver suits me as well as any other. Tell me what the trouble is, and we will talk the matter over, and see what can be done."

The stranger's words and manner put Perseus into quite a different mood from his former one. He resolved to tell Quicksilver all his difficulties, since he could not easily be worse off than he already was, and, very possibly, his new friend might give him some advice that would turn out well in the end. So he let the stranger know, in few words, precisely what the case was, — how that King Polydectes wanted the head of Medusa with the snaky locks as a bridal gift for the beautiful Princess Hippodamia, and how that he had undertaken to get it for him, but was afraid of being turned to stone.

"And that would be a great pity," said Quicksilver, with his mischievous smile. "You would make a very handsome marble statue, it is true, and it would be a considerable number of centuries before you crumbled away; but, on the whole, one would rather be a young man for a few years, than a stone image for a great many."

"Oh, far rather!" exclaimed Perseus, with the tears again standing in his eyes. "And, besides, what would my dear mother do, if her beloved son were turned into a stone?"

"Well, well, let us hope that the affair will not turn out so very badly," replied Quicksilver, in an encouraging tone. "I am the very person to help you, if anybody can. My sister and myself will do our utmost to bring you safe through the adventure, ugly as it now looks."

"Your sister?" repeated Perseus.

"Yes, my sister," said the stranger. "She is very wise, I promise you; and as for myself, I generally have all my wits about me, such as they are. If you show yourself bold and cautious, and follow our advice, you need not fear being a stone image yet awhile. But, first of all, you must polish your shield, till you can see your face in it as distinctly as in a mirror."

This seemed to Perseus rather an odd beginning of the adventure; for he thought it of far more consequence that the shield should be strong enough to defend him from the Gorgon's brazen claws, than that it should be bright enough to show him the reflection of his face. However, concluding that Quicksilver knew better than himself, he immediately set to work, and scrubbed the shield with so much diligence and good-will, that it very quickly shone like the moon in harvest-time. Quicksilver looked at it with a smile, and nodded his approbation. Then, taking off his own short and crooked sword, he girded it about Perseus, instead of the one which he had before worn.

"No sword but mine will answer your purpose," observed he; "the blade has a most excellent temper, and will cut through iron and brass as easily as through the slenderest twig. And now we will set out. The next thing is to find the Three Gray Women, who will tell us where to find the Nymphs."

"The Three Gray Women!" cried Perseus, to whom this seemed only a new difficulty in the path of his adventure; "pray who may the Three Gray Women be? I never heard of them before."

"They are three very strange old ladies," said Quicksilver, laughing. "They have but one eye among them, and only one tooth. Moreover, you must find them out by starlight, or in the dusk of the evening; for they never show themselves by the light either of the sun or moon."

"But," said Perseus, "why should I waste my time with these Three Gray Women? Would it not be better to set out at once in search of the terrible Gorgons?"

"No, no," answered his friend. "There are other things to be done, before you can find your way to the Gorgons. There is nothing for it but to hunt up these old ladies; and when we meet with them, you may be sure that the Gorgons are not a great way off. Come, let us be stirring!"

Perseus, by this time, felt so much confidence in his companion's sagacity, that he made no more objections, and professed himself ready to begin the adventure immediately. They accordingly set out, and walked at a pretty brisk pace; so brisk, indeed, that Perseus found it rather difficult to keep up with his nimble friend

Quicksilver. To say the truth, he had a singular idea that Quicksilver was furnished with a pair of winged shoes, which, of course, helped him along marvelously. And then, too, when Perseus looked sideways at him, out of the corner of his eye, he seemed to see wings on the side of his head; although, if he turned a full gaze, there were no such things to be perceived, but only an odd kind of cap. But, at all events, the twisted staff was evidently a great convenience to Quicksilver, and enabled him to proceed so fast, that Perseus, though a remarkably active young man, began to be out of breath.

"Here!" cried Quicksilver, at last, — for he knew well enough, rogue that he was, how hard Perseus found it to keep pace with him, — "take you the staff, for you need it a great deal more than I. Are there no better walkers than yourself in the island of Seriphus?"

"I could walk pretty well," said Perseus, glancing slyly at his companion's feet, "if I had only a pair of winged shoes."

"We must see about getting you a pair," answered Quicksilver.

But the staff helped Perseus along so bravely, that he no longer felt the slightest weariness. In fact, the stick seemed to be alive in his hand, and to lend some of its life to Perseus. He and Quicksilver now walked onward at their ease, talking very sociably together; and Quicksilver told so many pleasant stories about his former adventures, and how well his wits had served him on various occasions, that Perseus began to think

him a very wonderful person. He evidently knew the world; and nobody is so charming to a young man as a friend who has that kind of knowledge. Perseus listened the more eagerly, in the hope of brightening his own wits by what he heard.

At last, he happened to recollect that Quicksilver had spoken of a sister, who was to lend her assistance in the adventure which they were now bound upon.

"Where is she?" he inquired. "Shall we not meet her soon?"

"All at the proper time," said his companion. "But this sister of mine, you must understand, is quite a different sort of character from myself. She is very grave and prudent, seldom smiles, never laughs, and makes it a rule not to utter a word unless she has something particularly profound to say. Neither will she listen to any but the wisest conversation."

"Dear me!" ejaculated Perseus; "I shall be afraid to say a syllable."

"She is a very accomplished person, I assure you," continued Quicksilver, "and has all the arts and sciences at her fingers' ends. In short, she is so immoderately wise, that many people call her wisdom personified. But, to tell you the truth, she has hardly vivacity enough for my taste; and I think you would scarcely find her so pleasant a traveling companion as myself. She has her good points, nevertheless; and you will find the benefit of them, in your encounter with the Gorgons."

By this time it had grown quite dusk. They were now come to a very wild and desert place, overgrown

with shaggy bushes, and so silent and solitary that nobody seemed ever to have dwelt or journeyed there. All was waste and desolate, in the gray twilight, which grew every moment more obscure. Perseus looked about him, rather disconsolately, and asked Quicksilver whether they had a great deal farther to go.

"Hist! hist!" whispered his companion. "Make no noise! This is just the time and place to meet the Three Gray Women. Be careful that they do not see you before you see them; for, though they have but a single eye among the three, it is as sharp-sighted as half a dozen common eyes."

"But what must I do," asked Perseus, "when we meet them?"

Quicksilver explained to Perseus how the Three Gray Women managed with their one eye. They were in the habit, it seems, of changing it from one to another, as if it had been a pair of spectacles, or — which would have suited them better — a quizzing-glass. When one of the three had kept the eye a certain time, she took it out of the socket and passed it to one of her sisters, whose turn it might happen to be, and who immediately clapped it into her own head, and enjoyed a peep at the visible world. Thus it will easily be understood that only one of the Three Gray Women could see, while the other two were in utter darkness; and, moreover, at the instant when the eye was passing from hand to hand, neither of the poor old ladies was able to see a wink. I have heard of a great many strange things, in my day, and have witnessed not a few; but none, it seems to me, that can

compare with the oddity of these Three Gray Women, all peeping through a single eye.

So thought Perseus, likewise, and was so astonished that he almost fancied his companion was joking with him, and that there were no such old women in the world.

"You will soon find whether I tell the truth or no," observed Quicksilver. "Hark! hush! hist! hist! There they come, now!"

Perseus looked earnestly through the dusk of the evening, and there, sure enough, at no great distance off, he descried the Three Gray Women. The light being so faint he could not well make out what sort of figures they were; only he discovered that they had long gray hair; and, as they came nearer, he saw that two of them had but the empty socket of an eye, in the middle of their foreheads. But, in the middle of the third sister's forehead, there was a very large, bright, and piercing eye, which sparkled like a great diamond in a ring; and so penetrating did it seem to be, that Perseus could not help thinking it must possess the gift of seeing in the darkest midnight just as perfectly as at noonday. The sight of three persons' eyes was melted and collected into that single one.

Thus the three old dames got along about as comfortably, upon the whole, as if they could all see at once. She who chanced to have the eye in her forehead led the other two by the hands, peeping sharply about her, all the while; insomuch that Perseus dreaded lest she should see right through the thick clump of bushes behind which he and Quicksilver had hidden

themselves. My stars! it was positively terrible to be within reach of so very sharp an eye!

But, before they reached the clump of bushes, one of the Three Gray Women spoke.

"Sister! Sister Scarecrow!" cried she, "you have had the eye long enough. It is my turn now!"

"Let me keep it a moment longer, Sister Nightmare," answered Scarecrow. "I thought I had a glimpse of something behind that thick bush."

"Well, and what of that?" retorted Nightmare, peevishly. "Can't I see into a thick bush as easily as yourself? The eye is mine as well as yours; and I know the use of it as well as you, or may be a little better. I insist upon taking a peep immediately!"

But here the third sister, whose name was Shakejoint, began to complain, and said that it was her turn to have the eye, and that Scarecrow and Nightmare wanted to keep it all to themselves. To end the dispute, old Dame Scarecrow took the eye out of her forehead, and held it forth in her hand.

"Take it, one of you," cried she, "and quit this foolish quarreling. For my part, I shall be glad of a little thick darkness. Take it quickly, however, or I must clap it into my own head again!"

Accordingly, both Nightmare and Shakejoint put out their hands, groping eagerly to snatch the eye out of the hand of Scarecrow. But, being both alike blind, they could not easily find where Scarecrow's hand was; and Scarecrow, being now just as much in the dark as Shakejoint and Nightmare, could not at once meet either of their hands, in order to put the eye into

it. Thus (as you will see, with half an eye, my wise little auditors) these good old dames had fallen into a strange perplexity. For, though the eye shone and glistened like a star, as Scarecrow held it out, yet the Gray Women caught not the least glimpse of its light, and were all three in utter darkness, from too impatient a desire to see.

Quicksilver was so much tickled at beholding Shakejoint and Nightmare both groping for the eye, and each finding fault with Scarecrow and one another, that he could scarcely help laughing aloud.

"Now is your time!" he whispered to Perseus. "Quick, quick! before they can clap the eye into either of their heads. Rush out upon the old ladies, and snatch it from Scarecrow's hand!"

In an instant, while the Three Gray Women were still scolding each other, Perseus leaped from behind the clump of bushes, and made himself master of the prize. The marvelous eye, as he held it in his hand, shone very brightly, and seemed to look up into his face with a knowing air, and an expression as if it would have winked, had it been provided with a pair of eyelids for that purpose. But the Gray Women knew nothing of what had happened; and, each supposing that one of her sisters was in possession of the eye, they began their quarrel anew. At last, as Perseus did not wish to put these respectable dames to greater inconvenience than was really necessary, he thought it right to explain the matter.

"My good ladies," said he, "pray do not be angry with one another. If anybody is in fault, it is myself;

for I have the honor to hold your very brilliant and excellent eye in my own hand!"

"You! you have our eye! And who are you?" screamed the Three Gray Women, all in a breath; for they were terribly frightened, of course, at hearing a strange voice, and discovering that their eyesight had got into the hands of they could not guess whom. "Oh, what shall we do, sisters? what shall we do? We are all in the dark! Give us our eye! Give us our one, precious, solitary eye! You have two of your own! Give us our eye!"

"Tell them," whispered Quicksilver to Perseus, "that they shall have back the eye as soon as they direct you where to find the Nymphs who have the flying slippers, the magic wallet, and the helmet of darkness."

"My dear, good, admirable old ladies," said Perseus, addressing the Gray Women, "there is no occasion for putting yourselves into such a fright. I am by no means a bad young man. You shall have back your eye, safe and sound, and as bright as ever, the moment you tell me where to find the Nymphs."

"The Nymphs! Goodness me! sisters, what Nymphs does he mean?" screamed Scarecrow. "There are a great many Nymphs, people say; some that go a-hunting in the woods, and some that live inside of trees, and some that have a comfortable home in fountains of water. We know nothing at all about them. We are three unfortunate old souls, that go wandering about in the dusk, and never had but one eye amongst us, and that one you have stolen away. Oh, give

it back, good stranger! — whoever you are, give it back!"

All this while the Three Gray Women were groping with their outstretched hands, and trying their utmost to get hold of Perseus. But he took good care to keep out of their reach.

"My respectable dames," said he, — for his mother had taught him always to use the greatest civility, — "I hold your eye fast in my hand, and shall keep it safely for you, until you please to tell me where to find these Nymphs. The Nymphs, I mean, who keep the enchanted wallet, the flying slippers, and the what is it? — the helmet of invisibility."

"Mercy on us, sisters! what is the young man talking about?" exclaimed Scarecrow, Nightmare, and Shakejoint, one to another, with great appearance of astonishment. "A pair of flying slippers, quoth he! His heels would quickly fly higher than his head, if he were silly enough to put them on. And a helmet of invisibility! How could a helmet make him invisible, unless it were big enough for him to hide under it? And an enchanted wallet! What sort of a contrivance may that be, I wonder? No, no, good stranger! we can tell you nothing of these marvelous things. You have two eyes of your own, and we have but a single one amongst us three. You can find out such wonders better than three blind old creatures, like us."

Perseus, hearing them talk in this way, began really to think that the Gray Women knew nothing of the matter; and, as it grieved him to have put them to so much trouble, he was just on the point of restoring

their eye and asking pardon for his rudeness in snatching it away. But Quicksilver caught his hand.

"Don't let them make a fool of you!" said he. "These Three Gray Women are the only persons in the world that can tell you where to find the Nymphs; and, unless you get that information, you will never succeed in cutting off the head of Medusa with the snaky locks. Keep fast hold of the eye, and all will go well."

As it turned out, Quicksilver was in the right. There are but few things that people prize so much as they do their eyesight; and the Gray Women valued their single eye as highly as if it had been half a dozen, which was the number they ought to have had. Finding that there was no other way of recovering it, they at last told Perseus what he wanted to know. No sooner had they done so, than he immediately, and with the utmost respect, clapped the eye into the vacant socket in one of their foreheads, thanked them for their kindness, and bade them farewell. Before the young man was out of hearing, however, they had got into a new dispute, because he happened to have given the eye to Scarecrow, who had already taken her turn of it when their trouble with Perseus commenced.

It is greatly to be feared that the Three Gray Women were very much in the habit of disturbing their mutual harmony by bickerings of this sort; which was the more pity, as they could not conveniently do without one another, and were evidently intended to be inseparable companions. As a general rule, I would

advise all people, whether sisters or brothers, old or young, who chance to have but one eye amongst them, to cultivate forbearance, and not all insist upon peeping through it at once.

Quicksilver and Perseus, in the mean time, were making the best of their way in quest of the Nymphs. The old dames had given them such particular directions, that they were not long in finding them out. They proved to be very different persons from Nightmare, Shakejoint, and Scarecrow; for, instead of being old, they were young and beautiful; and instead of one eye amongst the sisterhood, each Nymph had two exceedingly bright eyes of her own, with which she looked very kindly at Perseus. They seemed to be acquainted with Quicksilver; and, when he told them the adventure which Perseus had undertaken, they made no difficulty about giving him the valuable articles that were in their custody. In the first place, they brought out what appeared to be a small purse, made of deer skin, and curiously embroidered, and bade him be sure and keep it safe. This was the magic wallet. The Nymphs next produced a pair of shoes, or slippers, or sandals, with a nice little pair of wings at the heel of each.

"Put them on, Perseus," said Quicksilver. "You will find yourself as light-heeled as you can desire for the remainder of our journey."

So Perseus proceeded to put one of the slippers on, while he laid the other on the ground by his side. Unexpectedly, however, this other slipper spread its wings, fluttered up off the ground, and would prob-

ably have flown away, if Quicksilver had not made a leap, and luckily caught it in the air.

"Be more careful," said he, as he gave it back to Perseus. "It would frighten the birds, up aloft, if they should see a flying slipper amongst them."

When Perseus had got on both of these wonderful slippers, he was altogether too buoyant to tread on earth. Making a step or two, lo and behold! upward he popped into the air, high above the heads of Quicksilver and the Nymphs, and found it very difficult to clamber down again. Winged slippers, and all such high-flying contrivances, are seldom quite easy to manage until one grows a little accustomed to them. Quicksilver laughed at his companion's involuntary activity, and told him that he must not be in so desperate a hurry, but must wait for the invisible helmet.

The good-natured Nymphs had the helmet, with its dark tuft of waving plumes, all in readiness to put upon his head. And now there happened about as wonderful an incident as anything that I have yet told you. The instant before the helmet was put on, there stood Perseus, a beautiful young man, with golden ringlets and rosy cheeks, the crooked sword by his side, and the brightly polished shield upon his arm, — a figure that seemed all made up of courage, sprightliness, and glorious light. But when the helmet had descended over his white brow, there was no longer any Perseus to be seen! Nothing but empty air! Even the helmet, that covered him with its invisibility, had vanished!

"Where are you, Perseus?" asked Quicksilver.

"Why, here, to be sure!" answered Perseus, very quietly, although his voice seemed to come out of the transparent atmosphere. "Just where I was a moment ago. Don't you see me?"

"No, indeed!" answered his friend. "You are hidden under the helmet. But, if I cannot see you, neither can the Gorgons. Follow me, therefore, and we will try your dexterity in using the winged slippers."

With these words, Quicksilver's cap spread its wings, as if his head were about to fly away from his shoulders; but his whole figure rose lightly into the air, and Perseus followed. By the time they had ascended a few hundred feet, the young man began to feel what a delightful thing it was to leave the dull earth so far beneath him, and to be able to flit about like a bird.

It was now deep night. Perseus looked upward, and saw the round, bright, silvery moon, and thought that he should desire nothing better than to soar up thither, and spend his life there. Then he looked downward again, and saw the earth, with its seas and lakes, and the silver courses of its rivers, and its snowy mountain-peaks, and the breadth of its fields, and the dark cluster of its woods, and its cities of white marble; and, with the moonshine sleeping over the whole scene, it was as beautiful as the moon or any star could be. And, among other objects, he saw the island of Seriphus, where his dear mother was. Sometimes he and Quicksilver approached a cloud, that, at a distance, looked as if it were made of fleecy silver;

although, when they plunged into it, they found themselves chilled and moistened with gray mist. So swift was their flight, however, that, in an instant, they emerged from the cloud into the moonlight again. Once, a high-soaring eagle flew right against the invisible Perseus. The bravest sights were the meteors, that gleamed suddenly out, as if a bonfire had been kindled in the sky, and made the moonshine pale for as much as a hundred miles around them.

As the two companions flew onward, Perseus fancied that he could hear the rustle of a garment close by his side; and it was on the side opposite to the one where he beheld Quicksilver, yet only Quicksilver was visible.

"Whose garment is this," inquired Perseus, "that keeps rustling close beside me in the breeze?"

"Oh, it is my sister's!" answered Quicksilver. "She is coming along with us, as I told you she would. We could do nothing without the help of my sister. You have no idea how wise she is. She has such eyes, too! Why, she can see you, at this moment, just as distinctly as if you were not invisible; and I'll venture to say, she will be the first to discover the Gorgons."

By this time, in their swift voyage through the air, they had come within sight of the great ocean, and were soon flying over it. Far beneath them, the waves tossed themselves tumultuously in mid-sea, or rolled a white surf-line upon the long beaches, or foamed against the rocky cliffs, with a roar that was thunderous, in the lower world; although it became a gentle murmur, like the voice of a baby half asleep, before it reached the ears of Perseus. Just then a voice spoke in the air close by

him. It seemed to be a woman's voice, and was melodious, though not exactly what might be called sweet, but grave and mild.

"Perseus," said the voice, "there are the Gorgons."

"Where?" exclaimed Perseus. "I cannot see them."

"On the shore of that island beneath you," replied the voice. "A pebble, dropped from your hand, would strike in the midst of them."

"I told you she would be the first to discover them," said Quicksilver to Perseus. "And there they are!"

Straight downward, two or three thousand feet below him, Perseus perceived a small island, with the sea breaking into white foam all around its rocky shore, except on one side, where there was a beach of snowy sand. He descended towards it, and, looking earnestly at a cluster or heap of brightness, at the foot of a precipice of black rocks, beheld, there were the terrible Gorgons! They lay fast asleep, soothed by the thunder of the sea: for it required a tumult that would have deafened everybody else to lull such fierce creatures into slumber. The moonlight glistened on their steely scales, and on their golden wings, which drooped idly over the sand. Their brazen claws, horrible to look at, were thrust out, and clutched the wave-beaten fragments of rock, while the sleeping Gorgons dreamed of tearing some poor mortal all to pieces. The snakes that served them instead of hair seemed likewise to be asleep; although, now and then, one would writhe, and lift its head, and thrust out its forked tongue, emitting a drowsy hiss, and then let itself subside among its sister snakes.

The Gorgons were more like an awful, gigantic kind of insect, — immense, golden-winged beetles, or dragon-flies, or things of that sort, — at once ugly and beautiful, — than like anything else; only that they were a thousand and a million times as big. And, with all this, there was something partly human about them, too. Luckily for Perseus, their faces were completely hidden from him by the posture in which they lay; for, had he but looked one instant at them, he would have fallen heavily out of the air, an image of senseless stone.

"Now," whispered Quicksilver, as he hovered by the side of Perseus, — "now is your time to do the deed! Be quick; for, if one of the Gorgons should awake, you are too late!"

"Which shall I strike at?" asked Perseus, drawing his sword and descending a little lower. "They all three look alike. All three have snaky locks. Which of the three is Medusa?"

It must be understood that Medusa was the only one of these dragon-monsters whose head Perseus could possibly cut off. As for the other two, let him have the sharpest sword that ever was forged, and he might have hacked away by the hour together, without doing them the least harm.

"Be cautious," said the calm voice which had before spoken to him. "One of the Gorgons is stirring in her sleep, and is just about to turn over. That is Medusa. Do not look at her! The sight would turn you to stone! Look at the reflection of her face and figure in the bright mirror of your shield."

Perseus now understood Quicksilver's motive for so earnestly exhorting him to polish his shield. In its surface he could safely look at the reflection of the Gorgon's face. And there it was, — that terrible countenance, — mirrored in the brightness of the shield, with the moonlight falling over it, and displaying all its horror. The snakes, whose venomous natures could not altogether sleep, kept twisting themselves over the forehead. It was the fiercest and most horrible face that ever was seen or imagined, and yet with a strange, fearful, and savage kind of beauty in it. The eyes were closed, and the Gorgon was still in a deep slumber; but there was an unquiet expression disturbing her features, as if the monster was troubled with an ugly dream. She gnashed her white tusks, and dug into the sand with her brazen claws.

The snakes, too, seemed to feel Medusa's dream, and to be made more restless by it. They twined themselves into tumultuous knots, writhed fiercely, and uplifted a hundred hissing heads, without opening their eyes.

"Now, now!" whispered Quicksilver, who was growing impatient. "Make a dash at the monster!"

"But be calm," said the grave, melodious voice, at the young man's side. "Look in your shield, as you fly downward, and take care that you do not miss your first stroke."

Perseus flew cautiously downward, still keeping his eyes on Medusa's face, as reflected in his shield. The nearer he came, the more terrible did the snaky visage and metallic body of the monster grow. At last, when

he found himself hovering over her within arm's length, Perseus uplifted his sword, while, at the same instant, each separate snake upon the Gorgon's head stretched threateningly upward, and Medusa unclosed her eyes. But she awoke too late. The sword was sharp; the stroke fell like a lightning-flash; and the head of the wicked Medusa tumbled from her body!

"Admirably done!" cried Quicksilver. "Make haste, and clap the head into your magic wallet."

To the astonishment of Perseus, the small, embroidered wallet, which he had hung about his neck, and which had hitherto been no bigger than a purse, grew all at once large enough to contain Medusa's head. As quick as thought, he snatched it up, with the snakes still writhing upon it, and thrust it in.

"Your task is done," said the calm voice. "Now fly; for the other Gorgons will do their utmost to take vengeance for Medusa's death."

It was, indeed, necessary to take flight; for Perseus had not done the deed so quietly but that the clash of his sword, and the hissing of the snakes, and the thump of Medusa's head as it tumbled upon the sea-beaten sand, awoke the other two monsters. There they sat, for an instant, sleepily rubbing their eyes with their brazen fingers, while all the snakes on their heads reared themselves on end with surprise, and with venomous malice against they knew not what. But when the Gorgons saw the scaly carcass of Medusa, headless, and her golden wings all ruffled, and half spread out on the sand, it was really awful to hear what yells and screeches they set up. And then the snakes!

They sent forth a hundred-fold hiss, with one consent, and Medusa's snakes answered them out of the magic wallet.

No sooner were the Gorgons broad awake than they hurtled upward into the air, brandishing their brass talons, gnashing their horrible tusks, and flapping their huge wings so wildly, that some of the golden feathers were shaken out, and floated down upon the shore. And there, perhaps, those very feathers lie scattered till this day. Up rose the Gorgons, as I tell you, staring horribly about, in hopes of turning somebody to stone. Had Perseus looked them in the face, or had he fallen into their clutches, his poor mother would never have kissed her boy again! But he took good care to turn his eyes another way; and, as he wore the helmet of invisibility, the Gorgons knew not in what direction to follow him; nor did he fail to make the best use of the winged slippers, by soaring upward a perpendicular mile or so. At that height, when the screams of those abominable creatures sounded faintly beneath him, he made a straight course for the island of Seriphus, in order to carry Medusa's head to King Polydectes.

I have no time to tell you of several marvelous things that befell Perseus, on his way homeward; such as his killing a hideous sea-monster, just as it was on the point of devouring a beautiful maiden; nor how he changed an enormous giant into a mountain of stone, merely by showing him the head of the Gorgon. If you doubt this latter story, you may make a voyage to Africa, some day or other, and see the very mountain, which is still known by the ancient giant's name.

Finally, our brave Perseus arrived at the island, where he expected to see his dear mother. But, during his absence, the wicked king had treated Danaë so very ill that she was compelled to make her escape, and had taken refuge in a temple, where some good old priests were extremely kind to her. These praiseworthy priests, and the kind-hearted fisherman who had first shown hospitality to Danaë and little Perseus when he found them afloat in the chest, seem to have been the only persons on the island who cared about doing right. All the rest of the people, as well as King Polydectes himself, were remarkably ill-behaved, and deserved no better destiny than that which was now to happen.

Not finding his mother at home, Perseus went straight to the palace, and was immediately ushered into the presence of the king. Polydectes was by no means rejoiced to see him; for he had felt almost certain, in his own evil mind, that the Gorgons would have torn the poor young man to pieces, and have eaten him up, out of the way. However, seeing him safely returned, he put the best face he could upon the matter and asked Perseus how he had succeeded.

"Have you performed your promise?" inquired he. "Have you brought me the head of Medusa with the snaky locks? If not, young man, it will cost you dear; for I must have a bridal present for the beautiful Princess Hippodamia, and there is nothing else that she would admire so much."

"Yes, please your Majesty," answered Perseus, in a quiet way, as if it were no very wonderful deed for

such a young man as he to perform. "I have brought you the Gorgon's head, snaky locks and all!"

"Indeed! Pray let me see it," quoth King Polydectes. "It must be a very curious spectacle, if all that travelers tell about it be true!"

"Your Majesty is in the right," replied Perseus. "It is really an object that will be pretty certain to fix the regards of all who look at it. And, if your Majesty think fit, I would suggest that a holiday be proclaimed, and that all your Majesty's subjects be summoned to behold this wonderful curiosity. Few of them, I imagine, have seen a Gorgon's head before, and perhaps never may again!"

The king well knew that his subjects were an idle set of reprobates, and very fond of sight-seeing, as idle persons usually are. So he took the young man's advice, and sent out heralds and messengers, in all directions, to blow the trumpet at the street-corners, and in the market-places, and wherever two roads met, and summon everybody to court. Thither, accordingly, came a great multitude of good-for-nothing vagabonds, all of whom, out of pure love of mischief, would have been glad if Perseus had met with some ill-hap in his encounter with the Gorgons. If there were any better people in the island (as I really hope there may have been, although the story tells nothing about any such), they stayed quietly at home, minding their business, and taking care of their little children. Most of the inhabitants, at all events, ran as fast as they could to the palace, and shoved, and pushed, and elbowed one another, in their eagerness to get near a balcony, on

which Perseus showed himself, holding the embroidered wallet in his hand.

On a platform, within full view of the balcony, sat the mighty King Polydectes, amid his evil counselors, and with his flattering courtiers in a semicircle round about him. Monarch, counselors, courtiers, and subjects all gazed eagerly towards Perseus.

"Show us the head! Show us the head!" shouted the people; and there was a fierceness in their cry, as if they would tear Perseus to pieces, unless he should satisfy them with what he had to show. "Show us the head of Medusa with the snaky locks!"

A feeling of sorrow and pity came over the youthful Perseus.

"O King Polydectes," cried he, "and ye many people, I am very loath to show you the Gorgon's head!"

"Ah, the villain and coward!" yelled the people, more fiercely than before. "He is making game of us! He has no Gorgon's head! Show us the head, if you have it, or we will take your own head for a football!"

The evil counselors whispered bad advice in the king's ear; the courtiers murmured, with one consent, that Perseus had shown disrespect to their royal lord and master; and the great King Polydectes himself waved his hand, and ordered him, with the stern, deep voice of authority, on his peril, to produce the head.

"Show me the Gorgon's head, or I will cut off your own!"

And Perseus sighed.

"BEHOLD IT, THEN!" CRIED PERSEUS

"This instant," repeated Polydectes, "or you die!"

"Behold it, then!" cried Perseus, in a voice like the blast of a trumpet.

And, suddenly holding up the head, not an eyelid had time to wink before the wicked King Polydectes, his evil counselors, and all his fierce subjects were no longer anything but the mere images of a monarch and his people. They were all fixed, forever, in the look and attitude of that moment! At the first glimpse of the terrible head of Medusa, they whitened into marble! And Perseus thrust the head back into his wallet, and went to tell his dear mother that she need no longer be afraid of the wicked King Polydectes.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

WHEN Jason, the son of the dethroned king of Iolchos, was a little boy, he was sent away from his parents, and placed under the queerest schoolmaster that ever you heard of. This learned person was one of the people, or quadrupeds, called Centaurs. He lived in a cavern, and had the body and legs of a white horse, with the head and shoulders of a man. His name was Chiron; and, in spite of his odd appearance, he was a very excellent teacher, and had several scholars, who afterwards did him credit by making a great figure in the world. The famous Hercules was one, and so was Achilles, and Philoctetes, likewise, and Æsculapius, who acquired immense repute as a doctor. The good Chiron taught his pupils how to play upon the harp, and how to cure diseases, and how to use the sword and shield, together with various other branches of education, in which the lads of those days used to be instructed, instead of writing and arithmetic.

I have sometimes suspected that Master Chiron was not really very different from other people, but that, being a kind-hearted and merry old fellow, he was in the habit of making believe that he was a horse, and scrambling about the school-room on all fours, and let-

ting the little boys ride upon his back. And so, when his scholars had grown up, and grown old, and were trotting their grandchildren on their knees, they told them about the sports of their school-days; and these young folks took the idea that their grandfathers had been taught their letters by a Centaur, half man and half horse. Little children, not quite understanding what is said to them, often get such absurd notions into their heads, you know.

Be that as it may, it has always been told for a fact (and always will be told, as long as the world lasts) that Chiron, with the head of a schoolmaster, had the body and legs of a horse. Just imagine the grave old gentleman clattering and stamping into the schoolroom on his four hoofs, perhaps treading on some little fellow's toes, flourishing his switch tail instead of a rod, and, now and then, trotting out of doors to eat a mouthful of grass! I wonder what the blacksmith charged him for a set of iron shoes.

So Jason dwelt in a cave, with this four-footed Chiron, from the time that he was an infant, only a few months old, until he had grown to the full height of a man. He became a very good harper, I suppose, and skillful in the use of weapons, and tolerably acquainted with herbs and other doctor's stuff, and, above all, an admirable horseman; for, in teaching young people to ride, the good Chiron must have been without a rival among schoolmasters. At length, being now a tall and athletic youth, Jason resolved to seek his fortune in the world, without asking Chiron's advice, or telling him anything about the matter. This was

very unwise, to be sure; and I hope none of you, my little hearers, will ever follow Jason's example. But, you are to understand, he had heard how that he himself was a prince royal, and how his father, King Æson, had been deprived of the kingdom of Iolchos by a certain Pelias, who would also have killed Jason, had he not been hidden in the Centaur's cave. And, being come to the strength of a man, Jason determined to set all this business to rights, and to punish the wicked Pelias for wronging his dear father, and to cast him down from the throne, and seat himself there instead.

With this intention, he took a spear in each hand, and threw a leopard's skin over his shoulders, to keep off the rain, and set forth on his travels, with his long yellow ringlets waving in the wind. The part of his dress on which he most prided himself was a pair of sandals that had been his father's. They were handsomely embroidered, and were tied upon his feet with strings of gold. But his whole attire was such as people did not very often see; and as he passed along, the women and children ran to the doors and windows, wondering whither this beautiful youth was journeying, with his leopard's skin and his golden-tied sandals, and what heroic deeds he meant to perform, with a spear in his right hand and another in his left.

I know not how far Jason had traveled, when he came to a turbulent river, which rushed right across his pathway, with specks of white foam among its black eddies, hurrying tumultuously onward, and roaring angrily as it went. Though not a very broad river in the dry seasons of the year, it was now swollen by

heavy rains and by the melting of the snow on the sides of Mount Olympus; and it thundered so loudly, and looked so wild and dangerous, that Jason, bold as he was, thought it prudent to pause upon the brink. The bed of the stream seemed to be strewn with sharp and rugged rocks, some of which thrust themselves above the water. By and by, an uprooted tree, with shattered branches, came drifting along the current, and got entangled among the rocks. Now and then a drowned sheep, and once the carcass of a cow, floated past.

In short, the swollen river had already done a great deal of mischief. It was evidently too deep for Jason to wade, and too boisterous for him to swim; he could see no bridge; and as for a boat, had there been any, the rocks would have broken it to pieces in an instant.

"See the poor lad," said a cracked voice close to his side. "He must have had but a poor education, since he does not know how to cross a little stream like this. Or is he afraid of wetting his fine golden-stringed sandals? It is a pity his four-footed schoolmaster is not here to carry him safely across on his back!"

Jason looked round greatly surprised, for he did not know that anybody was near. But beside him stood an old woman, with a ragged mantle over her head, leaning on a staff, the top of which was carved into the shape of a cuckoo. She looked very aged, and wrinkled, and infirm; and yet her eyes, which were as brown as those of an ox, were so extremely large and beautiful, that, when they were fixed on Jason's

eyes, he could see nothing else but them. The old woman had a pomegranate in her hand, although the fruit was then quite out of season.

"Whither are you going, Jason?" she now asked.

She seemed to know his name, you will observe; and, indeed, those great brown eyes looked as if they had a knowledge of everything, whether past or to come. While Jason was gazing at her, a peacock strutted forward and took his stand at the old woman's side.

"I am going to Iolchos," answered the young man, "to bid the wicked king Pelias come down from my father's throne, and let me reign in his stead."

"Ah, well, then," said the old woman, still with the same cracked voice, "if that is all your business, you need not be in a very great hurry. Just take me on your back, there's a good youth, and carry me across the river. I and my peacock have something to do on the other side, as well as yourself."

"Good mother," replied Jason, "your business can hardly be so important as the pulling down a king from his throne. Besides, as you may see for yourself, the river is very boisterous; and if I should chance to stumble, it would sweep both of us away more easily than it has carried off yonder uprooted tree. I would gladly help you if I could; but I doubt whether I am strong enough to carry you across."

"Then," said she, very scornfully, "neither are you strong enough to pull King Pelias off his throne. And, Jason, unless you will help an old woman at her need, you ought not to be a king. What are kings made for, save to succor the feeble and distressed? But do as you

please. Either take me on your back, or with my poor old limbs I shall try my best to struggle across the stream."

Saying this, the old woman poked with her staff in the river, as if to find the safest place in its rocky bed where she might make the first step. But Jason, by this time, had grown ashamed of his reluctance to help her. He felt that he could never forgive himself, if this poor feeble creature should come to any harm in attempting to wrestle against the headlong current. The good Chiron, whether half horse or no, had taught him that the noblest use of his strength was to assist the weak; and also that he must treat every young woman as if she were his sister, and every old one like a mother. Remembering these maxims, the vigorous and beautiful young man knelt down, and requested the good dame to mount upon his back.

"The passage seems to me not very safe," he remarked. "But as your business is so urgent, I will try to carry you across. If the river sweeps you away, it shall take me too."

"That, no doubt, will be a great comfort to both of us," quoth the old woman. "But never fear. We shall get safely across."

So she threw her arms around Jason's neck; and lifting her from the ground, he stepped boldly into the raging and foamy current, and began to stagger away from the shore. As for the peacock, it alighted on the old dame's shoulder. Jason's two spears, one in each hand, kept him from stumbling, and enabled him to feel his way among the hidden rocks; although,

every instant, he expected that his companion and himself would go down the stream, together with the drift-wood of shattered trees, and the carcasses of the sheep and cow. Down came the cold, snowy torrent from the steep side of Olympus, raging and thundering as if it had a real spite against Jason, or, at all events, were determined to snatch off his living burden from his shoulders. When he was half-way across, the uprooted tree (which I have already told you about) broke loose from among the rocks, and bore down upon him, with all its splintered branches sticking out like the hundred arms of the giant Briareus. It rushed past, however, without touching him. But the next moment, his foot was caught in a crevice between two rocks, and stuck there so fast, that, in the effort to get free, he lost one of his golden-stringed sandals.

At this accident Jason could not help uttering a cry of vexation.

"What is the matter, Jason?" asked the old woman.

"Matter enough," said the young man. "I have lost a sandal here among the rocks. And what sort of a figure shall I cut at the court of King Pelias, with a golden-stringed sandal on one foot, and the other foot bare!"

"Do not take it to heart," answered his companion, cheerily. "You never met with better fortune than in losing that sandal. It satisfies me that you are the very person whom the Speaking Oak has been talking about."

There was no time, just then, to inquire what the Speaking Oak had said. But the briskness of her

tone encouraged the young man; and besides, he had never in his life felt so vigorous and mighty as since taking this old woman on his back. Instead of being exhausted, he gathered strength as he went on; and, struggling up against the torrent, he at last gained the opposite shore, clambered up the bank, and set down the old dame and her peacock safely on the grass. As soon as this was done, however, he could not help looking rather despondently at his bare foot, with only a remnant of the golden string of the sandal clinging round his ankle.

"You will get a handsomer pair of sandals by and by," said the old woman, with a kindly look out of her beautiful brown eyes. "Only let King Pelias get a glimpse of that bare foot, and you shall see him turn as pale as ashes, I promise you. There is your path. Go along, my good Jason, and my blessing go with you. And when you sit on your throne, remember the old woman whom you helped over the river."

With these words, she hobbled away, giving him a smile over her shoulder as she departed. Whether the light of her beautiful brown eyes threw a glory round about her, or whatever the cause might be, Jason fancied that there was something very noble and majestic in her figure, after all, and that, though her gait seemed to be a rheumatic hobble, yet she moved with as much grace and dignity as any queen on earth. Her peacock, which had now fluttered down from her shoulder, strutted behind her in prodigious pomp, and spread out its magnificent tail on purpose for Jason to admire it.

When the old dame and her peacock were out of sight, Jason set forward on his journey. After traveling a pretty long distance, he came to a town situated at the foot of a mountain, and not a great way from the shore of the sea. On the outside of the town there was an immense crowd of people, not only men and women, but children, too, all in their best clothes, and evidently enjoying a holiday. The crowd was thickest towards the sea-shore; and in that direction, over the people's heads, Jason saw a wreath of smoke curling upward to the blue sky. He inquired of one of the multitude what town it was, near by, and why so many persons were here assembled together.

"This is the kingdom of Iolchos," answered the man, "and we are the subjects of King Pelias. Our monarch has summoned us together, that we may see him sacrifice a black bull to Neptune, who, they say, is his Majesty's father. Yonder is the king, where you see the smoke going up from the altar."

While the man spoke he eyed Jason with great curiosity; for his garb was quite unlike that of the Iolchians, and it looked very odd to see a youth with a leopard's skin over his shoulders, and each hand grasping a spear. Jason perceived, too, that the man stared particularly at his feet, one of which, you remember, was bare, while the other was decorated with his father's golden-stringed sandal.

"Look at him! only look at him!" said the man to his next neighbor. "Do you see? He wears but one sandal!"

Upon this, first one person, and then another, began

to stare at Jason, and everybody seemed to be greatly struck with something in his aspect; though they turned their eyes much oftener towards his feet than to any other part of his figure. Besides, he could hear them whispering to one another.

"One sandal! One sandal!" they kept saying. "The man with one sandal! Here he is at last! Whence has he come? What does he mean to do? What will the king say to the one-sandaled man?"

Poor Jason was greatly abashed, and made up his mind that the people of Iolchos were exceedingly ill bred, to take such public notice of an accidental deficiency in his dress. Meanwhile, whether it were that they hustled him forward, or that Jason, of his own accord, thrust a passage through the crowd, it so happened that he soon found himself close to the smoking altar, where King Pelias was sacrificing the black bull. The murmur and hum of the multitude, in their surprise at the spectacle of Jason with his one bare foot, grew so loud that it disturbed the ceremonies; and the king, holding the great knife with which he was just going to cut the bull's throat, turned angrily about, and fixed his eyes on Jason. The people had now withdrawn from around him, so that the youth stood in an open space near the smoking altar, front to front with the angry King Pelias.

"Who are you?" cried the king, with a terrible frown. "And how dare you make this disturbance, while I am sacrificing a black bull to my father Neptune?"

"It is no fault of mine," answered Jason. "Your

Majesty must blame the rudeness of your subjects, who have raised all this tumult because one of my feet happens to be bare."

When Jason said this, the king gave a quick, startled glance down at his feet.

"Ha!" muttered he, "here is the one-sandaled fellow, sure enough! What can I do with him?"

And he clutched more closely the great knife in his hand, as if he were half a mind to slay Jason instead of the black bull. The people round about caught up the king's words indistinctly as they were uttered; and first there was a murmur among them, and then a loud shout.

"The one-sandaled man has come! The prophecy must be fulfilled!"

For you are to know that, many years before, King Pelias had been told by the Speaking Oak of Dodona, that a man with one sandal should cast him down from his throne. On this account, he had given strict orders that nobody should ever come into his presence, unless both sandals were securely tied upon his feet; and he kept an officer in his palace, whose sole business it was to examine people's sandals, and to supply them with a new pair, at the expense of the royal treasury, as soon as the old ones began to wear out. In the whole course of the king's reign, he had never been thrown into such a fright and agitation as by the spectacle of poor Jason's bare foot. But, as he was naturally a bold and hard-hearted man, he soon took courage, and began to consider in what way he might rid himself of this terrible one-sandaled stranger.

"My good young man," said King Pelias, taking the softest tone imaginable, in order to throw Jason off his guard, "you are excessively welcome to my kingdom. Judging by your dress, you must have traveled a long distance; for it is not the fashion to wear leopard-skins in this part of the world. Pray what may I call your name? and where did you receive your education?"

"My name is Jason," answered the young stranger. "Ever since my infancy, I have dwelt in the cave of Chiron the Centaur. He was my instructor, and taught me music, and horsemanship, and how to cure wounds, and likewise how to inflict wounds with my weapons!"

"I have heard of Chiron the schoolmaster," replied King Pelias, "and how that there is an immense deal of learning and wisdom in his head, although it happens to be set on a horse's body. It gives me great delight to see one of his scholars at my court. But, to test how much you have profited under so excellent a teacher, will you allow me to ask you a single question?"

"I do not pretend to be very wise," said Jason. "But ask me what you please, and I will answer to the best of my ability."

Now King Pelias meant cunningly to entrap the young man, and to make him say something that should be the cause of mischief and destruction to himself. So with a crafty and evil smile upon his face, he spoke as follows.

"What would you do, brave Jason," asked he, "if there were a man in the world by whom, as you had reason to believe, you were doomed to be ruined and

slain, — what would you do, I say, if that man stood before you, and in your power?"

When Jason saw the malice and wickedness which King Pelias could not prevent from gleaming out of his eyes, he probably guessed that the king had discovered what he came for, and that he intended to turn his own words against himself. Still he scorned to tell a falsehood. Like an upright and honorable prince, as he was, he determined to speak out the real truth. Since the king had chosen to ask him the question, and since Jason had promised him an answer, there was no right way, save to tell him precisely what would be the most prudent thing to do, if he had his worst enemy in his power.

Therefore, after a moment's consideration, he spoke up, with a firm and manly voice.

"I would send such a man," said he, "in quest of the Golden Fleece!"

This enterprise, you will understand, was, of all others, the most difficult and dangerous in the world. In the first place, it would be necessary to make a long voyage through unknown seas. There was hardly a hope, or a possibility, that any young man who should undertake this voyage would either succeed in obtaining the Golden Fleece, or would survive to return home and tell of the perils he had run. The eyes of King Pelias sparkled with joy, therefore, when he heard Jason's reply.

"Well said, wise man with the one sandal!" cried he. "Go, then, and, at the peril of your life, bring me back the Golden Fleece."

"I go," answered Jason, composedly. "If I fail, you need not fear that I will ever come back to trouble you again. But if I return to Iolchos with the prize, then, King Pelias, you must hasten down from your lofty throne, and give me your crown and sceptre."

"That I will," said the king, with a sneer. "Meantime, I will keep them very safely for you."

The first thing that Jason thought of doing, after he left the king's presence, was to go to Dodona, and inquire of the Talking Oak what course it was best to pursue. This wonderful tree stood in the centre of an ancient wood. Its stately trunk rose up a hundred feet into the air, and threw a broad and dense shadow over more than an acre of ground. Standing beneath it, Jason looked up among the knotted branches and green leaves, and into the mysterious heart of the old tree, and spoke aloud, as if he were addressing some person who was hidden in the depths of the foliage.

"What shall I do," said he, "in order to win the Golden Fleece?"

At first there was a deep silence, not only within the shadow of the Talking Oak, but all through the solitary wood. In a moment or two, however, the leaves of the oak began to stir and rustle, as if a gentle breeze were wandering amongst them, although the other trees of the wood were perfectly still. The sound grew louder, and became like the roar of a high wind. By and by, Jason imagined that he could distinguish words, but very confusedly, because each separate leaf of the tree seemed to be a tongue, and the whole myriad of tongues were babbling at once. But the noise

waxed broader and deeper, until it resembled a tornado sweeping through the oak, and making one great utterance out of the thousand and thousand of little murmurs which each leafy tongue had caused by its rustling. And now, though it still had the tone of mighty wind roaring among the branches, it was also like a deep bass voice, speaking, as distinctly as a tree could be expected to speak, the following words: —

"Go to Argus, the ship-builder, and bid him build a galley with fifty oars."

Then the voice melted again into the indistinct murmur of the rustling leaves, and died gradually away. When it was quite gone, Jason felt inclined to doubt whether he had actually heard the words, or whether his fancy had not shaped them out of the ordinary sound made by a breeze, while passing through the thick foliage of the tree.

But on inquiry among the people of Iolchos, he found that there was really a man in the city, by the name of Argus, who was a very skillful builder of vessels. This showed some intelligence in the oak; else how should it have known that any such person existed? At Jason's request, Argus readily consented to build him a galley so big that it should require fifty strong men to row it; although no vessel of such a size and burden had heretofore been seen in the world. So the head carpenter, and all his journeymen and apprentices, began their work; and for a good while afterwards, there they were, busily employed, hewing out the timbers, and making a great clatter with their hammers; until the new ship, which was called the

Argo, seemed to be quite ready for sea. And, as the Talking Oak had already given him such good advice, Jason thought that it would not be amiss to ask for a little more. He visited it again, therefore, and standing beside its huge, rough trunk, inquired what he should do next.

This time, there was no such universal quivering of the leaves, throughout the whole tree, as there had been before. But after a while, Jason observed that the foliage of a great branch which stretched above his head had begun to rustle, as if the wind were stirring that one bough, while all the other boughs of the oak were at rest.

"Cut me off!" said the branch, as soon as it could speak distinctly, — "cut me off! cut me off! and carve me into a figure-head for your galley."

Accordingly, Jason took the branch at its word, and lopped it off the tree. A carver in the neighborhood engaged to make the figure-head. He was a tolerably good workman, and had already carved several figure-heads, in what he intended for feminine shapes, and looking pretty much like those which we see nowadays stuck up under a vessel's bowsprit, with great staring eyes, that never wink at the dash of the spray. But (what was very strange) the carver found that his hand was guided by some unseen power, and by a skill beyond his own, and that his tools shaped out an image which he had never dreamed of. When the work was finished, it turned out to be the figure of a beautiful woman with a helmet on her head, from beneath which the long ringlets fell down upon her

shoulders. On the left arm was a shield, and in its centre appeared a lifelike representation of the head of Medusa with the snaky locks. The right arm was extended, as if pointing onward. The face of this wonderful statue, though not angry or forbidding, was so grave and majestic, that perhaps you might call it severe; and as for the mouth, it seemed just ready to unclose its lips, and utter words of the deepest wisdom.

Jason was delighted with the oaken image, and gave the carver no rest until it was completed, and set up where a figure-head has always stood, from that time to this, in the vessel's prow.

"And now," cried he, as he stood gazing at the calm, majestic face of the statue, "I must go to the Talking Oak, and inquire what next to do."

"There is no need of that, Jason," said a voice which, though it was far lower, reminded him of the mighty tones of the great oak. "When you desire good advice, you can seek it of me."

Jason had been looking straight into the face of the image when these words were spoken. But he could hardly believe either his ears or his eyes. The truth was, however, that the oaken lips had moved, and, to all appearance, the voice had proceeded from the statue's mouth. Recovering a little from his surprise, Jason bethought himself that the image had been carved out of the wood of the Talking Oak, and that, therefore, it was really no great wonder, but on the contrary, the most natural thing in the world, that it should possess the faculty of speech. It would have

been very odd, indeed, if it had not. But certainly it was a great piece of good fortune that he should be able to carry so wise a block of wood along with him in his perilous voyage.

"Tell me, wondrous image," exclaimed Jason, — "since you inherit the wisdom of the Speaking Oak of Dodona, whose daughter you are, — tell me, where shall I find fifty bold youths, who will take each of them an oar of my galley? They must have sturdy arms to row, and brave hearts to encounter perils, or we shall never win the Golden Fleece."

"Go," replied the oaken image, — "go, summon all the heroes of Greece."

And, in fact, considering what a great deed was to be done, could any advice be wiser than this which Jason received from the figure-head of his vessel? He lost no time in sending messengers to all the cities, and making known to the whole people of Greece that Prince Jason, the son of King Æson, was going in quest of the Fleece of Gold, and that he desired the help of forty-nine of the bravest and strongest young men alive, to row his vessel and share his dangers. And Jason himself would be the fiftieth.

At this news, the adventurous youths, all over the country, began to bestir themselves. Some of them had already fought with giants, and slain dragons; and the younger ones, who had not yet met with such good fortune, thought it a shame to have lived so long without getting astride of a flying serpent, or sticking their spears into a Chimæra, or, at least, thrusting their right arms down a monstrous lion's throat.

There was a fair prospect that they would meet with plenty of such adventures before finding the Golden Fleece. As soon as they could furbish up their helmets and shields, therefore, and gird on their trusty swords, they came thronging to Iolchos, and clambered on board the new galley. Shaking hands with Jason, they assured him that they did not care a pin for their lives, but would help row the vessel to the remotest edge of the world, and as much farther as he might think it best to go.

Many of these brave fellows had been educated by Chiron, the four-footed pedagogue, and were therefore old schoolmates of Jason, and knew him to be a lad of spirit. The mighty Hercules, whose shoulders afterwards held up the sky, was one of them. And there were Castor and Pollux, the twin brothers, who were never accused of being chicken-hearted, although they had been hatched out of an egg; and Theseus, who was so renowned for killing the Minotaur; and Lynceus, with his wonderfully sharp eyes, which could see through a millstone, or look right down into the depths of the earth, and discover the treasures that were there; and Orpheus, the very best of harpers, who sang and played upon his lyre so sweetly, that the brute beasts stood upon their hind legs, and capered merrily to the music. Yes, and at some of his more moving tunes, the rocks bestirred their moss-grown bulk out of the ground, and a grove of forest trees uprooted themselves, and, nodding their tops to one another, performed a country dance.

One of the rowers was a beautiful young woman,

named Atalanta, who had been nursed among the mountains by a bear. So light of foot was this fair damsel that she could step from one foamy crest of a wave to the foamy crest of another, without wetting more than the sole of her sandal. She had grown up in a very wild way, and talked much about the rights of women, and loved hunting and war far better than her needle. But, in my opinion, the most remarkable of this famous company were two sons of the North Wind (airy youngsters, and of rather a blustering disposition), who had wings on their shoulders, and, in case of a calm, could puff out their cheeks, and blow almost as fresh a breeze as their father. I ought not to forget the prophets and conjurers, of whom there were several in the crew, and who could foretell what would happen to-morrow, or the next day, or a hundred years hence, but were generally quite unconscious of what was passing at the moment.

Jason appointed Tiphys to be helmsman, because he was a star-gazer, and knew the points of the compass. Lynceus, on account of his sharp sight, was stationed as a lookout in the prow, where he saw a whole day's sail ahead, but was rather apt to overlook things that lay directly under his nose. If the sea only happened to be deep enough, however, Lynceus could tell you exactly what kind of rocks or sands were at the bottom of it; and he often cried out to his companions, that they were sailing over heaps of sunken treasure, which yet he was none the richer for beholding. To confess the truth, few people believed him when he said it.

Well! But when the Argonauts, as these fifty brave adventurers were called, had prepared everything for the voyage, an unforeseen difficulty threatened to end it before it was begun. The vessel, you must understand, was so long, and broad, and ponderous, that the united force of all the fifty was insufficient to shove her into the water. Hercules, I suppose, had not grown to his full strength, else he might have set her afloat as easily as a little boy launches his boat upon a puddle. But here were these fifty heroes pushing, and straining, and growing red in the face, without making the Argo start an inch. At last, quite wearied out, they sat themselves down on the shore, exceedingly disconsolate, and thinking that the vessel must be left to rot and fall in pieces, and that they must either swim across the sea or lose the Golden Fleece.

All at once, Jason bethought himself of the galley's miraculous figure-head.

"O daughter of the Talking Oak," cried he, "how shall we set to work to get our vessel into the water?"

"Seat yourselves," answered the image (for it had known what ought to be done from the very first, and was only waiting for the question to be put), — "seat yourselves, and handle your oars, and let Orpheus play upon his harp."

Immediately the fifty heroes got on board, and seizing their oars, held them perpendicularly in the air, while Orpheus (who liked such a task far better than rowing) swept his fingers across the harp. At the first ringing note of the music, they felt the vessel stir, Orpheus thrummed away briskly, and the galley slid

at once into the sea, dipping her prow so deeply that the figure-head drank the wave with its marvelous lips, and rose again as buoyant as a swan. The rowers plied their fifty oars; the white foam boiled up before the prow; the water gurgled and bubbled in their wake; while Orpheus continued to play so lively a strain of music, that the vessel seemed to dance over the billows by way of keeping time to it. Thus triumphantly did the Argo sail out of the harbor, amidst the huzzas and good wishes of everybody except the wicked old Pelias, who stood on a promontory, scowling at her, and wishing that he could blow out of his lungs the tempest of wrath that was in his heart, and so sink the galley with all on board. When they had sailed above fifty miles over the sea, Lynceus happened to cast his sharp eyes behind, and said that there was this bad-hearted king, still perched upon the promontory, and scowling so gloomily that it looked like a black thunder-cloud in that quarter of the horizon.

In order to make the time pass away more pleasantly during the voyage, the heroes talked about the Golden Fleece. It originally belonged, it appears, to a Bœotian ram, who had taken on his back two children, when in danger of their lives, and fled with them over land and sea, as far as Colchis. One of the children, whose name was Helle, fell into the sea and was drowned. But the other (a little boy, named Phrixus) was brought safe ashore by the faithful ram, who, however, was so exhausted that he immediately lay down and died. In memory of this good deed, and as a token of his true heart, the fleece of the poor dead

ram was miraculously changed to gold, and became one of the most beautiful objects ever seen on earth. It was hung upon a tree in a sacred grove, where it had now been kept I know not how many years, and was the envy of mighty kings, who had nothing so magnificent in any of their palaces.

If I were to tell you all the adventures of the Argonauts, it would take me till nightfall, and perhaps a great deal longer. There was no lack of wonderful events, as you may judge from what you may have already heard. At a certain island they were hospitably received by King Cyzicus, its sovereign, who made a feast for them, and treated them like brothers. But the Argonauts saw that this good king looked downcast and very much troubled, and they therefore inquired of him what was the matter. King Cyzicus hereupon informed them that he and his subjects were greatly abused and incommoded by the inhabitants of a neighboring mountain, who made war upon them, and killed many people, and ravaged the country. And while they were talking about it, Cyzicus pointed to the mountain, and asked Jason and his companions what they saw there.

"I see some very tall objects," answered Jason; "but they are at such a distance that I cannot distinctly make out what they are. To tell your Majesty the truth, they look so very strangely that I am inclined to think them clouds, which have chanced to take something like human shapes."

"I see them very plainly," remarked Lynceus, whose eyes, you know, were as far-sighted as a telescope.

"They are a band of enormous giants, all of whom have six arms apiece, and a club, a sword, or some other weapon in each of their hands."

"You have excellent eyes," said King Cyzicus. "Yes; they are six-armed giants, as you say, and these are the enemies whom I and my subjects have to contend with."

The next day, when the Argonauts were about setting sail, down came these terrible giants, stepping a hundred yards at a stride, brandishing their six arms apiece, and looking very formidable, so far aloft in the air. Each of these monsters was able to carry on a whole war by himself, for with one of his arms he could fling immense stones, and wield a club with another, and a sword with a third, while the fourth was poking a long spear at the enemy, and the fifth and sixth were shooting him with a bow and arrow. But, luckily, though the giants were so huge, and had so many arms, they had each but one heart, and that no bigger nor braver than the heart of an ordinary man. Besides, if they had been like the hundred-armed Briareus, the brave Argonauts would have given them their hands full of fight. Jason and his friends went boldly to meet them, slew a great many, and made the rest take to their heels, so that, if the giants had had six legs apiece instead of six arms, it would have served them better to run away with.

Another strange adventure happened when the voyagers came to Thrace, where they found a poor blind king, named Phineus, deserted by his subjects, and living in a very sorrowful way, all by himself. On

Jason's inquiring whether they could do him any service, the king answered that he was terribly tormented by three great winged creatures, called Harpies, which had the faces of women, and the wings, bodies, and claws of vultures. These ugly wretches were in the habit of snatching away his dinner, and allowed him no peace of his life. Upon hearing this, the Argonauts spread a plentiful feast on the seashore, well knowing, from what the blind king said of their greediness, that the Harpies would snuff up the scent of the victuals, and quickly come to steal them away. And so it turned out; for, hardly was the table set, before the three hideous vulture women came flapping their wings, seized the food in their talons, and flew off as fast as they could. But the two sons of the North Wind drew their swords, spread their pinions, and set off through the air in pursuit of the thieves, whom they at last overtook among some islands, after a chase of hundreds of miles. The two winged youths blustered terribly at the Harpies (for they had the rough temper of their father), and so frightened them with their drawn swords, that they solemnly promised never to trouble King Phineus again.

Then the Argonauts sailed onward, and met with many other marvelous incidents, any one of which would make a story by itself. At one time, they landed on an island, and were reposing on the grass, when they suddenly found themselves assailed by what seemed a shower of steel-headed arrows. Some of them stuck in the ground, while others hit against their shields, and several penetrated their flesh. The fifty

heroes started up, and looked about them for the hidden enemy, but could find none, nor see any spot, on the whole island, where even a single archer could lie concealed. Still, however, the steel-headed arrows came whizzing among them; and, at last, happening to look upward, they beheld a large flock of birds, hovering and wheeling aloft, and shooting their feathers down upon the Argonauts. These feathers were the steel-headed arrows that had so tormented them. There was no possibility of making any resistance; and the fifty heroic Argonauts might all have been killed or wounded by a flock of troublesome birds, without ever setting eyes on the Golden Fleece, if Jason had not thought of asking the advice of the oaken image.

So he ran to the galley as fast as his legs would carry him.

"O daughter of the Speaking Oak," cried he, all out of breath, "we need your wisdom more than ever before! We are in great peril from a flock of birds, who are shooting us with their steel-pointed feathers. What can we do to drive them away?"

"Make a clatter on your shields," said the image.

On receiving this excellent counsel, Jason hurried back to his companions (who were far more dismayed than when they fought with the six-armed giants), and bade them strike with their swords upon their brazen shields. Forthwith the fifty heroes set heartily to work, banging with might and main, and raised such a terrible clatter that the birds made what haste they could to get away; and though they had shot half the

feathers out of their wings, they were soon seen skimming among the clouds, a long distance off, and looking like a flock of wild geese. Orpheus celebrated this victory by playing a triumphant anthem on his harp, and sang so melodiously that Jason begged him to desist, lest, as the steel-feathered birds had been driven away by an ugly sound, they might be enticed back again by a sweet one.

While the Argonauts remained on this island, they saw a small vessel approaching the shore, in which were two young men of princely demeanor, and exceedingly handsome, as young princes generally were in those days. Now, who do you imagine these two voyagers turned out to be? Why, if you will believe me, they were the sons of that very Phrixus, who, in his childhood, had been carried to Colchis on the back of the golden-fleeced ram. Since that time, Phrixus had married the king's daughter; and the two young princes had been born and brought up at Colchis, and had spent their play-days in the outskirts of the grove, in the centre of which the Golden Fleece was hanging upon a tree. They were now on their way to Greece, in hopes of getting back a kingdom that had been wrongfully taken from their father.

When the princes understood whither the Argonauts were going, they offered to turn back and guide them to Colchis. At the same time, however, they spoke as if it were very doubtful whether Jason would succeed in getting the Golden Fleece. According to their account, the tree on which it hung was guarded by a terrible dragon, who never failed to devour, at one

mouthful, every person who might venture within his reach.

"There are other difficulties in the way," continued the young princes. "But is not this enough? Ah, brave Jason, turn back before it is too late. It would grieve us to the heart, if you and your nine-and-forty brave companions should be eaten up, at fifty mouthfuls, by this execrable dragon."

"My young friends," quietly replied Jason, "I do not wonder that you think the dragon very terrible. You have grown up from infancy in the fear of this monster, and therefore still regard him with the awe that children feel for the bugbears and hobgoblins which their nurses have talked to them about. But, in my view of the matter, the dragon is merely a pretty large serpent, who is not half so likely to snap me up at one mouthful as I am to cut off his ugly head, and strip the skin from his body. At all events, turn back who may, I will never see Greece again unless I carry with me the Golden Fleece."

"We will none of us turn back!" cried his nine-and-forty brave comrades. "Let us get on board the galley this instant; and if the dragon is to make a breakfast of us, much good may it do him."

And Orpheus (whose custom it was to set everything to music) began to harp and sing most gloriously, and made every mother's son of them feel as if nothing in this world were so delectable as to fight dragons, and nothing so truly honorable as to be eaten up at one mouthful, in case of the worst.

After this (being now under the guidance of the

two princes, who were well acquainted with the way), they quickly sailed to Colchis. When the king of the country, whose name was Æetes, heard of their arrival, he instantly summoned Jason to court. The king was a stern and cruel-looking potentate; and though he put on as polite and hospitable an expression as he could, Jason did not like his face a whit better than that of the wicked King Pelias, who dethroned his father.

"You are welcome, brave Jason," said King Æetes. "Pray, are you on a pleasure voyage? — or do you meditate the discovery of unknown islands? — or what other cause has procured me the happiness of seeing you at my court?"

"Great sir," replied Jason, with an obeisance, — for Chiron had taught him how to behave with propriety, whether to kings or beggars, — "I have come hither with a purpose which I now beg your Majesty's permission to execute. King Pelias, who sits on my father's throne (to which he has no more right than to the one on which your excellent Majesty is now seated), has engaged to come down from it, and to give me his crown and sceptre, provided I bring him the Golden Fleece. This, as your Majesty is aware, is now hanging on a tree here at Colchis; and I humbly solicit your gracious leave to take it away."

In spite of himself, the king's face twisted itself into an angry frown; for, above all things else in the world, he prized the Golden Fleece, and was even suspected of having done a very wicked act, in order to get it into his own possession. It put him into the worst possible humor, therefore, to hear that the gal-

lant Prince Jason, and forty-nine of the bravest young warriors of Greece, had come to Colchis with the sole purpose of taking away his chief treasure.

"Do you know," asked King Æetes, eying Jason very sternly, "what are the conditions which you must fulfill before getting possession of the Golden Fleece?"

"I have heard," rejoined the youth, "that a dragon lies beneath the tree on which the prize hangs, and that whoever approaches him runs the risk of being devoured at a mouthful."

"True," said the king, with a smile that did not look particularly good-natured. "Very true, young man. But there are other things as hard, or perhaps a little harder, to be done, before you can even have the privilege of being devoured by the dragon. For example, you must first tame my two brazen-footed and brazen-lunged bulls, which Vulcan, the wonderful blacksmith, made for me. There is a furnace in each of their stomachs; and they breathe such hot fire out of their mouths and nostrils, that nobody has hitherto gone nigh them without being instantly burned to a small, black cinder. What do you think of this, my brave Jason?"

"I must encounter the peril," answered Jason, composedly, "since it stands in the way of my purpose."

"After taming the fiery bulls," continued King Æetes, who was determined to scare Jason if possible, "you must yoke them to a plough, and must plough the sacred earth in the grove of Mars, and sow some of the same dragon's teeth from which Cadmus raised a crop of armed men. They are an unruly set of rep-

robates, those sons of the dragon's teeth; and unless you treat them suitably, they will fall upon you sword in hand. You and your nine-and-forty Argonauts, my bold Jason, are hardly numerous or strong enough to fight with such a host as will spring up."

"My master Chiron," replied Jason, "taught me, long ago, the story of Cadmus. Perhaps I can manage the quarrelsome sons of the dragon's teeth as well as Cadmus did."

"I wish the dragon had him," muttered King Æetes to himself, "and the four-footed pedant, his schoolmaster, into the bargain. Why, what a fool-hardy, self-conceited coxcomb he is! We 'll see what my fire-breathing bulls will do for him. Well, Prince Jason," he continued, aloud, and as complaisantly as he could, "make yourself comfortable for to-day, and to-morrow morning, since you insist upon it, you shall try your skill at the plough."

While the king talked with Jason, a beautiful young woman was standing behind the throne. She fixed her eyes earnestly upon the youthful stranger, and listened attentively to every word that was spoken; and when Jason withdrew from the king's presence, this young woman followed him out of the room.

"I am the king's daughter," she said to him, "and my name is Medea. I know a great deal of which other young princesses are ignorant, and can do many things which they would be afraid so much as to dream of. If you will trust to me, I can instruct you how to tame the fiery bulls, and sow the dragon's teeth, and get the Golden Fleece."

"Indeed, beautiful princess," answered Jason, "if you will do me this service, I promise to be grateful to you my whole life long."

Gazing at Medea, he beheld a wonderful intelligence in her face. She was one of those persons whose eyes are full of mystery; so that, while looking into them, you seem to see a very great way, as into a deep well, yet can never be certain whether you see into the farthest depths, or whether there be not something else hidden at the bottom. If Jason had been capable of fearing anything, he would have been afraid of making this young princess his enemy; for, beautiful as she now looked, she might, the very next instant, become as terrible as the dragon that kept watch over the Golden Fleece.

"Princess," he exclaimed, "you seem indeed very wise and very powerful. But how can you help me to do the things of which you speak? Are you an enchantress?"

"Yes, Prince Jason," answered Medea, with a smile, "you have hit upon the truth. I am an enchantress. Circe, my father's sister, taught me to be one, and I could tell you, if I pleased, who was the old woman with the peacock, the pomegranate, and the cuckoo staff, whom you carried over the river; and, likewise, who it is that speaks through the lips of the oaken image that stands in the prow of your galley. I am acquainted with some of your secrets, you perceive. It is well for you that I am favorably inclined; for, otherwise, you would hardly escape being snapped up by the dragon."

"I should not so much care for the dragon," replied Jason, "if I only knew how to manage the brazen-footed and fiery-lunged bulls."

"If you are as brave as I think you, and as you have need to be," said Medea, "your own bold heart will teach you that there is but one way of dealing with a mad bull. What it is I leave you to find out in the moment of peril. As for the fiery breath of these animals, I have a charmed ointment here, which will prevent you from being burned up, and cure you if you chance to be a little scorched."

So she put a golden box into his hand, and directed him how to apply the perfumed unguent which it contained, and where to meet her at midnight.

"Only be brave," added she, "and before daybreak the brazen bulls shall be tamed."

The young man assured her that his heart would not fail him. He then rejoined his comrades, and told them what had passed between the princess and himself, and warned them to be in readiness in case there might be need of their help.

At the appointed hour he met the beautiful Medea on the marble steps of the king's palace. She gave him a basket, in which were the dragon's teeth, just as they had been pulled out of the monster's jaws by Cadmus, long ago. Medea then led Jason down the palace steps, and through the silent streets of the city, and into the royal pasture-ground, where the two brazen-footed bulls were kept. It was a starry night, with a bright gleam along the eastern edge of the sky, where the moon was soon going to show herself. After

entering the pasture, the princess paused and looked around.

"There they are," said she, "reposing themselves and chewing their fiery cuds in that farthest corner of the field. It will be excellent sport, I assure you, when they catch a glimpse of your figure. My father and all his court delight in nothing so much as to see a stranger trying to yoke them, in order to come at the Golden Fleece. It makes a holiday in Colchis whenever such a thing happens. For my part, I enjoy it immensely. You cannot imagine in what a mere twinkling of an eye their hot breath shrivels a young man into a black cinder."

"Are you sure, beautiful Medea," asked Jason, "quite sure, that the unguent in the gold box will prove a remedy against those terrible burns?"

"If you doubt, if you are in the least afraid," said the princess, looking him in the face by the dim starlight, "you had better never have been born than go a step nigher to the bulls."

But Jason had set his heart steadfastly on getting the Golden Fleece; and I positively doubt whether he would have gone back without it, even had he been certain of finding himself turned into a red-hot cinder, or a handful of white ashes, the instant he made a step farther. He therefore let go Medea's hand, and walked boldly forward in the direction whither she had pointed. At some distance before him he perceived four streams of fiery vapor, regularly appearing, and again vanishing, after dimly lighting up the surrounding obscurity. These, you will understand,

were caused by the breath of the brazen bulls, which was quietly stealing out of their four nostrils, as they lay chewing their cuds.

At the first two or three steps which Jason made, the four fiery streams appeared to gush out somewhat more plentifully; for the two brazen bulls had heard his foot-tramp, and were lifting up their hot noses to snuff the air. He went a little farther, and by the way in which the red vapor now spouted forth, he judged that the creatures had got upon their feet. Now he could see glowing sparks, and vivid jets of flame. At the next step, each of the bulls made the pasture echo with a terrible roar, while the burning breath, which they thus belched forth, lit up the whole field with a momentary flash. One other stride did bold Jason make; and, suddenly as a streak of lightning, on came these fiery animals, roaring like thunder, and sending out sheets of white flame, which so kindled up the scene that the young man could discern every object more distinctly than by daylight. Most distinctly of all he saw the two horrible creatures galloping right down upon him, their brazen hoofs rattling and ringing over the ground, and their tails sticking up stiffly into the air, as has always been the fashion with angry bulls. Their breath scorched the herbage before them. So intensely hot it was, indeed, that it caught a dry tree, under which Jason was now standing, and set it all in a light blaze. But as for Jason himself (thanks to Medea's enchanted ointment), the white flame curled around his body, without injuring him a jot more than if he had been made of asbestos.

Greatly encouraged at finding himself not yet turned into a cinder, the young man awaited the attack of the bulls. Just as the brazen brutes fancied themselves sure of tossing him into the air, he caught one of them by the horn, and the other by his screwed-up tail, and held them in a gripe like that of an iron vise, one with his right hand, the other with his left. Well, he must have been wonderfully strong in his arms, to be sure. But the secret of the matter was, that the brazen bulls were enchanted creatures, and that Jason had broken the spell of their fiery fierceness by his bold way of handling them. And, ever since that time, it has been the favorite method of brave men, when danger assails them, to do what they call "taking the bull by the horns;" and to gripe him by the tail is pretty much the same thing, — that is, to throw aside fear, and overcome the peril by despising it.

It was now easy to yoke the bulls, and to harness them to the plough, which had lain rusting on the ground for a great many years gone by; so long was it before anybody could be found capable of ploughing that piece of land. Jason, I suppose, had been taught how to draw a furrow by the good old Chiron, who, perhaps, used to allow himself to be harnessed to the plough. At any rate, our hero succeeded perfectly well in breaking up the greensward; and, by the time that the moon was a quarter of her journey up the sky, the ploughed field lay before him, a large tract of black earth, ready to be sown with the dragon's teeth. So Jason scattered them broadcast, and harrowed them into the soil with a brush-harrow, and took his stand

on the edge of the field, anxious to see what would happen next.

"Must we wait long for harvest-time?" he inquired of Medea, who was now standing by his side.

"Whether sooner or later, it will be sure to come," answered the princess. "A crop of armed men never fails to spring up, when the dragon's teeth have been sown."

The moon was now high aloft in the heavens, and threw its bright beams over the ploughed field, where as yet there was nothing to be seen. Any farmer, on viewing it, would have said that Jason must wait weeks before the green blades would peep from among the clods, and whole months before the yellow grain would be ripened for the sickle. But by and by, all over the field, there was something that glistened in the moonbeams, like sparkling drops of dew. These bright objects sprouted higher, and proved to be the steel heads of spears. Then there was a dazzling gleam from a vast number of polished brass helmets, beneath which, as they grew farther out of the soil, appeared the dark and bearded visages of warriors, struggling to free themselves from the imprisoning earth. The first look that they gave at the upper world was a glare of wrath and defiance. Next were seen their bright breastplates; in every right hand there was a sword or a spear, and on each left arm a shield; and when this strange crop of warriors had but half grown out of the earth, they struggled, — such was their impatience of restraint,— and, as it were, tore themselves up by the roots. Wherever a dragon's tooth had fallen, there stood a man

armed for battle. They made a clangor with their swords against their shields, and eyed one another fiercely; for they had come into this beautiful world, and into the peaceful moonlight, full of rage and stormy passions, and ready to take the life of every human brother, in recompense of the boon of their own existence.

There have been many other armies in the world that seemed to possess the same fierce nature with the one which had now sprouted from the dragon's teeth; but these, in the moonlit field, were the more excusable, because they never had women for their mothers. And how it would have rejoiced any great captain, who was bent on conquering the world, like Alexander or Napoleon, to raise a crop of armed soldiers as easily as Jason did!

For a while, the warriors stood flourishing their weapons, clashing their swords against their shields, and boiling over with the red-hot thirst for battle. Then they began to shout, "Show us the enemy! Lead us to the charge! Death or victory! Come on, brave comrades! Conquer or die!" and a hundred other outcries, such as men always bellow forth on a battle-field, and which these dragon people seemed to have at their tongues' ends. At last, the front rank caught sight of Jason, who, beholding the flash of so many weapons in the moonlight, had thought it best to draw his sword. In a moment all the sons of the dragon's teeth appeared to take Jason for an enemy; and crying with one voice, "Guard the Golden Fleece!" they ran at him with uplifted swords and protruded spears. Jason knew that

it would be impossible to withstand this bloodthirsty battalion with his single arm, but determined, since there was nothing better to be done, to die as valiantly as if he himself had sprung from a dragon's tooth.

Medea, however, bade him snatch up a stone from the ground.

"Throw it among them quickly!" cried she. "It is the only way to save yourself."

The armed men were now so nigh that Jason could discern the fire flashing out of their enraged eyes, when he let fly the stone, and saw it strike the helmet of a tall warrior, who was rushing upon him with his blade aloft. The stone glanced from this man's helmet to the shield of his nearest comrade, and thence flew right into the angry face of another, hitting him smartly between the eyes. Each of the three who had been struck by the stone took it for granted that his next neighbor had given him a blow; and instead of running any farther towards Jason, they began a fight among themselves. The confusion spread through the host, so that it seemed scarcely a moment before they were all hacking, hewing, and stabbing at one another, lopping off arms, heads, and legs, and doing such memorable deeds that Jason was filled with immense admiration; although, at the same time, he could not help laughing to behold these mighty men punishing each other for an offense which he himself had committed. In an incredibly short space of time (almost as short, indeed, as it had taken them to grow up), all but one of the heroes of the dragon's teeth were stretched lifeless on the field. The last survivor, the bravest and

strongest of the whole, had just force enough to wave his crimson sword over his head, and give a shout of exultation, crying, "Victory! Victory! Immortal fame!" when he himself fell down, and lay quietly among his slain brethren.

And there was the end of the army that had sprouted from the dragon's teeth. That fierce and feverish fight was the only enjoyment which they had tasted on this beautiful earth.

"Let them sleep in the bed of honor," said the Princess Medea, with a sly smile at Jason. "The world will always have simpletons enough, just like them, fighting and dying for they know not what, and fancying that posterity will take the trouble to put laurel wreaths on their rusty and battered helmets. Could you help smiling, Prince Jason, to see the self-conceit of that last fellow, just as he tumbled down?"

"It made me very sad," answered Jason, gravely. "And, to tell you the truth, princess, the Golden Fleece does not appear so well worth the winning, after what I have here beheld."

"You will think differently in the morning," said Medea. "True, the Golden Fleece may not be so valuable as you have thought it; but then there is nothing better in the world; and one must needs have an object, you know. Come! Your night's work has been well performed; and to-morrow you can inform King Æetes that the first part of your allotted task is fulfilled."

Agreeably to Medea's advice, Jason went betimes in the morning to the palace of King Æetes. Entering

the presence-chamber, he stood at the foot of the throne, and made a low obeisance.

"Your eyes look heavy, Prince Jason," observed the king; "you appear to have spent a sleepless night. I hope you have been considering the matter a little more wisely, and have concluded not to get yourself scorched to a cinder, in attempting to tame my brazen-lunged bulls."

"That is already accomplished, may it please your Majesty," replied Jason. "The bulls have been tamed and yoked; the field has been ploughed; the dragon's teeth have been sown broadcast, and harrowed into the soil; the crop of armed warriors has sprung up, and they have slain one another, to the last man. And now I solicit your Majesty's permission to encounter the dragon, that I may take down the Golden Fleece from the tree, and depart, with my nine-and-forty comrades."

King Æetes scowled, and looked very angry and excessively disturbed; for he knew that, in accordance with his kingly promise, he ought now to permit Jason to win the fleece, if his courage and skill should enable him to do so. But, since the young man had met with such good luck in the matter of the brazen bulls and the dragon's teeth, the king feared that he would be equally successful in slaying the dragon. And therefore, though he would gladly have seen Jason snapped up at a mouthful, he was resolved (and it was a very wrong thing of this wicked potentate) not to run any further risk of losing his beloved fleece.

"You never would have succeeded in this business,

young man," said he, "if my undutiful daughter Medea had not helped you with her enchantments. Had you acted fairly, you would have been, at this instant, a black cinder or a handful of white ashes. I forbid you, on pain of death, to make any more attempts to get the Golden Fleece. To speak my mind plainly, you shall never set eyes on so much as one of its glistening locks."

Jason left the king's presence in great sorrow and anger. He could think of nothing better to be done than to summon together his forty-nine brave Argonauts, march at once to the grove of Mars, slay the dragon, take possession of the Golden Fleece, get on board the Argo, and spread all sail for Iolchos. The success of the scheme depended, it is true, on the doubtful point whether all the fifty heroes might not be snapped up, at so many mouthfuls, by the dragon. But, as Jason was hastening down the palace steps, the Princess Medea called after him, and beckoned him to return. Her black eyes shone upon him with such a keen intelligence, that he felt as if there were a serpent peeping out of them; and although she had done him so much service only the night before, he was by no means very certain that she would not do him an equally great mischief before sunset. These enchantresses, you must know, are never to be depended upon.

"What says King Æetes, my royal and upright father?" inquired Medea, slightly smiling. "Will he give you the Golden Fleece, without any further risk or trouble?"

"On the contrary," answered Jason, "he is very angry with me for taming the brazen bulls and sowing the dragon's teeth. And he forbids me to make any more attempts, and positively refuses to give up the Golden Fleece, whether I slay the dragon or no."

"Yes, Jason," said the princess, "and I can tell you more. Unless you set sail from Colchis before to-morrow's sunrise, the king means to burn your fifty-oared galley, and put yourself and your forty-nine brave comrades to the sword. But be of good courage. The Golden Fleece you shall have, if it lies within the power of my enchantments to get it for you. Wait for me here an hour before midnight."

At the appointed hour, you might again have seen Prince Jason and the Princess Medea, side by side, stealing through the streets of Colchis, on their way to the sacred grove, in the centre of which the Golden Fleece was suspended to a tree. While they were crossing the pasture-ground, the brazen bulls came towards Jason, lowing, nodding their heads, and thrusting forth their snouts, which, as other cattle do, they loved to have rubbed and caressed by a friendly hand. Their fierce nature was thoroughly tamed; and, with their fierceness, the two furnaces in their stomachs had likewise been extinguished, insomuch that they probably enjoyed far more comfort in grazing and chewing their cuds than ever before. Indeed, it had heretofore been a great inconvenience to these poor animals, that, whenever they wished to eat a mouthful of grass, the fire out of their nostrils had shriveled it up, before they could manage to crop it.

How they contrived to keep themselves alive is more than I can imagine. But now, instead of emitting jets of flame and streams of sulphurous vapor, they breathed the very sweetest of cow breath.

After kindly patting the bulls, Jason followed Medea's guidance into the grove of Mars, where the great oak-trees, that had been growing for centuries, threw so thick a shade that the moonbeams struggled vainly to find their way through it. Only here and there a glimmer fell upon the leaf-strewn earth, or now and then a breeze stirred the boughs aside, and gave Jason a glimpse of the sky, lest, in that deep obscurity, he might forget that there was one, overhead. At length, when they had gone farther and farther into the heart of the duskiness, Medea squeezed Jason's hand.

"Look yonder," she whispered. "Do you see it?"

Gleaming among the venerable oaks, there was a radiance, not like the moonbeams, but rather resembling the golden glory of the setting sun. It proceeded from an object, which appeared to be suspended at about a man's height from the ground, a little farther within the wood.

"What is it?" asked Jason.

"Have you come so far to seek it," exclaimed Medea, "and do you not recognize the meed of all your toils and perils, when it glitters before your eyes? It is the Golden Fleece."

Jason went onward a few steps farther, and then stopped to gaze. Oh, how beautiful it looked, shining with a marvelous light of its own, that inestimable

prize, which so many heroes had longed to behold, but had perished in the quest of it, either by the perils of their voyage, or by the fiery breath of the brazen-lunged bulls.

"How gloriously it shines!" cried Jason, in a rapture. "It has surely been dipped in the richest gold of sunset. Let me hasten onward, and take it to my bosom."

"Stay," said Medea, holding him back. "Have you forgotten what guards it?"

To say the truth, in the joy of beholding the object of his desires, the terrible dragon had quite slipped out of Jason's memory. Soon, however, something came to pass that reminded him what perils were still to be encountered. An antelope, that probably mistook the yellow radiance for sunrise, came bounding fleetly through the grove. He was rushing straight towards the Golden Fleece, when suddenly there was a frightful hiss, and the immense head and half the scaly body of the dragon was thrust forth (for he was twisted round the trunk of the tree on which the fleece hung), and seizing the poor antelope, swallowed him with one snap of his jaws.

After this feat, the dragon seemed sensible that some other living creature was within reach on which he felt inclined to finish his meal. In various directions he kept poking his ugly snout among the trees, stretching out his neck a terrible long way, now here, now there, and now close to the spot where Jason and the princess were hiding behind an oak. Upon my word, as the head came waving and undulating through

the air, and reaching almost within arm's length of Prince Jason, it was a very hideous and uncomfortable sight. The gape of his enormous jaws was nearly as wide as the gateway of the king's palace.

"Well, Jason," whispered Medea (for she was ill-natured, as all enchantresses are, and wanted to make the bold youth tremble), "what do you think now of your prospect of winning the Golden Fleece?"

Jason answered only by drawing his sword and making a step forward.

"Stay, foolish youth," said Medea, grasping his arm. "Do not you see you are lost, without me as your good angel? In this gold box I have a magic potion, which will do the dragon's business far more effectually than your sword."

The dragon had probably heard the voices; for, swift as lightning, his black head and forked tongue came hissing among the trees again, darting full forty feet at a stretch. As it approached, Medea tossed the contents of the gold box right down the monster's wide-open throat. Immediately, with an outrageous hiss and a tremendous wriggle, — flinging his tail up to the tip-top of the tallest tree, and shattering all its branches as it crashed heavily down again, — the dragon fell at full length upon the ground, and lay quite motionless.

"It is only a sleeping potion," said the enchantress to Prince Jason. "One always finds a use for these mischievous creatures, sooner or later; so I did not wish to kill him outright. Quick! Snatch the prize, and let us be gone. You have won the Golden Fleece."

Jason caught the Fleece from the tree, and hurried through the grove, the deep shadows of which were illuminated as he passed by the golden glory of the precious object that he bore along. A little way before him, he beheld the old woman whom he had helped over the stream, with her peacock beside her. She clapped her hands for joy, and beckoning him to make haste, disappeared among the duskiness of the trees. Espying the two winged sons of the North Wind (who were disporting themselves in the moonlight, a few hundred feet aloft), Jason bade them tell the rest of the Argonauts to embark as speedily as possible. But Lynceus, with his sharp eyes, had already caught a glimpse of him, bringing the Golden Fleece, although several stone-walls, a hill, and the black shadows of the grove of Mars intervened between. By his advice, the heroes had seated themselves on the benches of the galley, with their oars held perpendicularly, ready to let fall into the water.

As Jason drew near, he heard the Talking Image calling to him with more than ordinary eagerness, in its grave, sweet voice: —

"Make haste, Prince Jason! For your life, make haste!"

With one bound he leaped aboard. At sight of the glorious radiance of the Golden Fleece, the nine-and-forty heroes gave a mighty shout, and Orpheus, striking his harp, sang a song of triumph, to the cadence of which the galley flew over the water, homeward bound, as if careering along with wings!

THE PARADISE OF CHILDREN

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

LONG, long ago, when this old world was in its tender infancy, there was a child, named Epimetheus, who never had either father or mother; and, that he might not be lonely, another child, fatherless and motherless like himself, was sent from a far country, to live with him, and be his playfellow and helpmate. Her name was Pandora.

The first thing that Pandora saw, when she entered the cottage where Epimetheus dwelt, was a great box. And almost the first question which she put to him, after crossing the threshold, was this, —

"Epimetheus, what have you in that box?"

"My dear little Pandora," answered Epimetheus, "that is a secret, and you must be kind enough not to ask any questions about it. The box was left here to be kept safely, and I do not myself know what it contains."

"But who gave it to you?" asked Pandora. "And where did it come from?"

"That is a secret, too," replied Epimetheus.

"How provoking!" exclaimed Pandora, pouting her lip. "I wish the great ugly box were out of the way!"

"Oh, come, don't think of it any more," cried Epime-

theus. "Let us run out of doors, and have some nice play with the other children."

It is thousands of years since Epimetheus and Pandora were alive; and the world, nowadays, is a very different sort of thing from what it was in their time. Then, everybody was a child. There needed no fathers and mothers to take care of the children; because there was no danger, nor trouble of any kind, and no clothes to be mended, and there was always plenty to eat and drink. Whenever a child wanted his dinner, he found it growing on a tree; and, if he looked at the tree in the morning, he could see the expanding blossom of that night's supper; or, at eventide, he saw the tender bud of to-morrow's breakfast. It was a very pleasant life indeed. No labor to be done, no tasks to be studied; nothing but sports and dances, and sweet voices of children talking, or caroling like birds, or gushing out in merry laughter, throughout the livelong day.

What was most wonderful of all, the children never quarreled among themselves; neither had they any crying fits; nor, since time first began, had a single one of these little mortals ever gone apart into a corner, and sulked. Oh, what a good time was that to be alive in! The truth is, those ugly little winged monsters, called Troubles, which are now almost as numerous as mosquitoes, had never yet been seen on the earth. It is probable that the very greatest disquietude which a child had ever experienced was Pandora's vexation at not being able to discover the secret of the mysterious box.

This was at first only the faint shadow of a Trouble;

but every day it grew more and more substantial, until, before a great while, the cottage of Epimetheus and Pandora was less sunshiny than those of the other children.

"Whence can the box have come?" Pandora continually kept saying to herself and to Epimetheus. "And what in the world can be inside of it?"

"Always talking about this box!" said Epimetheus, at last; for he had grown extremely tired of the subject. "I wish, dear Pandora, you would try to talk of something else. Come, let us go and gather some ripe figs, and eat them under the trees, for our supper. And I know a vine that has the sweetest and juiciest grapes you ever tasted."

"Always talking about grapes and figs!" cried Pandora, pettishly.

"Well, then," said Epimetheus, who was a very good-tempered child, like a multitude of children in those days, "let us run out and have a merry time with our playmates."

"I am tired of merry times, and don't care if I never have any more!" answered our pettish little Pandora. "And, besides, I never do have any. This ugly box! I am so taken up with thinking about it all the time. I insist upon your telling me what is inside of it."

"As I have already said, fifty times over, I do not know!" replied Epimetheus, getting a little vexed. "How, then, can I tell you what is inside?"

"You might open it," said Pandora, looking sideways at Epimetheus, "and then we could see for ourselves."

"Pandora, what are you thinking of?" exclaimed Epimetheus.

And his face expressed so much horror at the idea of looking into a box which had been confided to him on the condition of his never opening it, that Pandora thought it best not to suggest it any more. Still, however, she could not help thinking and talking about the box.

"At least," said she, "you can tell me how it came here."

"It was left at the door," replied Epimetheus, "just before you came, by a person who looked very smiling and intelligent, and who could hardly forbear laughing as he put it down. He was dressed in an odd kind of a cloak, and had on a cap that seemed to be made partly of feathers, so that it looked almost as if it had wings."

"What sort of a staff had he?" asked Pandora.

"Oh, the most curious staff you ever saw!" cried Epimetheus. "It was like two serpents twisting around a stick, and was carved so naturally that I, at first, thought the serpents were alive."

"I know him," said Pandora, thoughtfully. "Nobody else has such a staff. It was Quicksilver; and he brought me hither, as well as the box. No doubt he intended it for me; and, most probably, it contains pretty dresses for me to wear, or toys for you and me to play with, or something very nice for us both to eat!"

"Perhaps so," answered Epimetheus, turning away. "But until Quicksilver comes back and tells us so, we have neither of us any right to lift the lid of the box."

"What a dull boy he is!" muttered Pandora, as Epimetheus left the cottage. "I do wish he had a little more enterprise!"

For the first time since her arrival, Epimetheus had gone out without asking Pandora to accompany him. He went to gather figs and grapes by himself, or to seek whatever amusement he could find, in other society than his little playfellow's. He was tired to death of hearing about the box, and heartily wished that Quicksilver, or whatever was the messenger's name, had left it at some other child's door, where Pandora would never have set eyes on it. So perseveringly as she did babble about this one thing! The box, the box, and nothing but the box! It seemed as if the box were bewitched, and as if the cottage were not big enough to hold it, without Pandora's continually stumbling over it, and making Epimetheus stumble over it likewise, and bruising all four of their shins.

Well, it was really hard that poor Epimetheus should have a box in his ears from morning till night; especially as the little people of the earth were so unaccustomed to vexations, in those happy days, that they knew not how to deal with them. Thus, a small vexation made as much disturbance then, as a far bigger one would in our own times.

After Epimetheus was gone, Pandora stood gazing at the box. She had called it ugly, above a hundred times; but, in spite of all that she had said against it, it was positively a very handsome article of furniture, and would have been quite an ornament to any room in which it should be placed. It was made of a beau-

tiful kind of wood, with dark and rich veins spreading over its surface, which was so highly polished that little Pandora could see her face in it. As the child had no other looking-glass, it is odd that she did not value the box, merely on this account.

The edges and corners of the box were carved with most wonderful skill. Around the margin there were figures of graceful men and women, and the prettiest children ever seen, reclining or sporting amid a profusion of flowers and foliage; and these various objects were so exquisitely represented, and were wrought together in such harmony, that flowers, foliage, and human beings seemed to combine into a wreath of mingled beauty. But here and there, peeping forth from behind the carved foliage, Pandora once or twice fancied that she saw a face not so lovely, or something or other that was disagreeable, and which stole the beauty out of all the rest. Nevertheless, on looking more closely, and touching the spot with her finger, she could discover nothing of the kind. Some face, that was really beautiful, had been made to look ugly by her catching a sideway glimpse at it.

The most beautiful face of all was done in what is called high relief, in the centre of the lid. There was nothing else, save the dark, smooth richness of the polished wood, and this one face in the centre, with a garland of flowers about its brow. Pandora had looked at this face a great many times, and imagined that the mouth could smile if it liked, or be grave when it chose, the same as any living mouth. The features, indeed, all wore a very lively and rather mischievous expression,

which looked almost as if it needs must burst out of the carved lips, and utter itself in words.

Had the mouth spoken, it would probably have been something like this:

"Do not be afraid, Pandora! What harm can there be in opening the box? Never mind that poor, simple Epimetheus! You are wiser than he, and have ten times as much spirit. Open the box, and see if you do not find something very pretty!"

The box, I had almost forgotten to say, was fastened; not by a lock, nor by any other such contrivance, but by a very intricate knot of gold cord. There appeared to be no end to this knot, and no beginning. Never was a knot so cunningly twisted, nor with so many ins and outs, which roguishly defied the skillfulest fingers to distangle them. And yet, by the very difficulty that there was in it, Pandora was the more tempted to examine the knot, and just see how it was made. Two or three times, already, she had stooped over the box, and taken the knot between her thumb and forefinger, but without positively trying to undo it.

"I really believe," said she to herself, "that I begin to see how it was done. Nay, perhaps I could tie it up again, after undoing it. There would be no harm in that, surely. Even Epimetheus would not blame me for that. I need not open the box, and should not, of course, without the foolish boy's consent, even if the knot were untied."

It might have been better for Pandora if she had had a little work to do, or anything to employ her mind upon, so as not to be so constantly thinking of

this one subject. But children led so easy a life, before any Troubles came into the world, that they had really a great deal too much leisure. They could not be forever playing at hide-and-seek among the flower-shrubs, or at blind man's buff with garlands over their eyes, or at whatever other games had been found out, while Mother Earth was in her babyhood. When life is all sport, toil is the real play. There was absolutely nothing to do. A little sweeping and dusting about the cottage, I suppose, and the gathering of fresh flowers (which were only too abundant everywhere), and arranging them in vases, — and poor little Pandora's day's work was over. And then, for the rest of the day, there was the box!

After all, I am not quite sure that the box was not a blessing to her in its way. It supplied her with such a variety of ideas to think of, and to talk about, whenever she had anybody to listen! When she was in good-humor, she could admire the bright polish of its sides, and the rich border of beautiful faces and foliage that ran all around it. Or, if she chanced to be ill-tempered, she could give it a push, or kick it with her naughty little foot. And many a kick did the box — (but it was a mischievous box, as we shall see, and deserved all it got) — many a kick did it receive. But, certain it is, if it had not been for the box, our active-minded little Pandora would not have known half so well how to spend her time as she now did.

For it was really an endless employment to guess what was inside. What could it be, indeed? Just imagine, my little hearers, how busy your wits would

be, if there were a great box in the house, which, as you might have reason to suppose, contained something new and pretty for your Christmas or New Year's gifts. Do you think that you should be less curious than Pandora? If you were left alone with the box, might you not feel a little tempted to lift the lid? But you would not do it. Oh, fie! No, no! Only, if you thought there were toys in it, it would be so very hard to let slip an opportunity of taking just one peep! I know not whether Pandora expected any toys; for none had yet begun to be made, probably, in those days, when the world itself was one great plaything for the children that dwelt upon it. But Pandora was convinced that there was something very beautiful and valuable in the box; and therefore she felt just as anxious to take a peep as any of these little girls, here around me, would have felt. And, possibly, a little more so; but of that I am not quite so certain.

On this particular day, however, which we have so long been talking about, her curiosity grew so much greater than it usually was, that, at last, she approached the box. She was more than half determined to open it, if she could. Ah, naughty Pandora!

First, however, she tried to lift it. It was heavy; quite too heavy for the slender strength of a child, like Pandora. She raised one end of the box a few inches from the floor, and let it fall again, with a pretty loud thump. A moment afterwards, she almost fancied that she heard something stir inside of the box. She applied her ear as closely as possible, and listened.

Positively, there did seem to be a kind of stifled murmur, within! Or was it merely the singing in Pandora's ears? Or could it be the beating of her heart? The child could not quite satisfy herself whether she had heard anything or no. But, at all events, her curiosity was stronger than ever.

As she drew back her head, her eyes fell upon the knot of gold cord.

"It must have been a very ingenious person who tied this knot," said Pandora to herself. "But I think I could untie it, nevertheless. I am resolved, at least, to find the two ends of the cord."

So she took the golden knot in her fingers, and pried into its intricacies as sharply as she could. Almost without intending it, or quite knowing what she was about, she was soon busily engaged in attempting to undo it. Meanwhile, the bright sunshine came through the open window; as did likewise the merry voices of the children, playing at a distance, and perhaps the voice of Epimetheus among them. Pandora stopped to listen. What a beautiful day it was! Would it not be wiser if she were to let the troublesome knot alone, and think no more about the box, but run and join her little playfellows, and be happy?

All this time, however, her fingers were half unconsciously busy with the knot; and happening to glance at the flower-wreathed face on the lid of the enchanted box, she seemed to perceive it slyly grinning at her.

"That face looks very mischievous," thought Pandora. "I wonder whether it smiles because I am do-

ing wrong. I have the greatest mind in the world to run away."

But just then by the merest accident she gave the knot a kind of a twist which produced a wonderful result. The gold cord untied itself as if by magic, and left the box without a fastening.

"This is the strangest thing I ever knew," said Pandora. "What will Epimetheus say? And how can I possibly tie it up again?"

She made one or two attempts to retie the knot, but soon found it quite beyond her skill. It had so entangled itself in evidently that she could not in the least remember how the strings had been doubled into one another; and when she took to recollect the shape and appearance of the knot, it seemed to have gone entirely out of her mind. Nothing was to be done, therefore, but to let the box remain as it was until Epimetheus should come in.

"But," said Pandora, "when he finds the knot untied, he will know that I have done it. How shall I make him believe that I have not looked into the box?"

And then the thought came into her naughty little heart, that since she would be suspected of having looked into the box, she might just as well do so at once. Oh, very naughty and very foolish Pandora! You should have thought only of doing what was right, and of leaving undone what was wrong, and not of what your playfellow Epimetheus would say or believe! And so perhaps she might, if the enchanted face on the lid of the box had not looked so tantalizingly persuasive at her, and if the cord not seemed

to hear, more distinctly than before, the murmur of small voices within. She could not tell whether it was fancy or no; but there was quite a little tumult of whispers in her ear, — or else it was her curiosity that whispered, —

"Let us out, dear Pandora, — pray let us out! We will be such nice pretty playfellows for you! Only let us out!"

"What can it be?" thought Pandora. "Is there something alive in the box? Well! — yes! — I am resolved to take just one peep! Only one peep; and then the lid shall be shut down as safely as ever! There cannot possibly be any harm in just one little peep!"

But it is now time for us to see what Epimetheus was doing.

This was the first time, since his little playmate had come to dwell with him, that he had attempted to enjoy any pleasure in which she did not partake. But nothing went right; nor was he nearly so happy as on other days. He could not find a sweet grape or a ripe fig (if Epimetheus had a fault, it was a little too much fondness for figs); or, if ripe at all, they were overripe, and so sweet as to be cloying. There was no mirth in his heart, such as usually made his voice gush out, of its own accord, and swell the merriment of his companions. In short, he grew so uneasy and discontented, that the other children could not imagine what was the matter with Epimetheus. Neither did he himself know what ailed him, any better than they did. For you must recollect that, at the time we are speaking of, it was everybody's nature, and con-

stant habit, to be happy. The world had not yet learned to be otherwise. Not a single soul or body, since these children were first sent to enjoy themselves on the beautiful earth, had ever been sick or out of sorts.

At length, discovering that, somehow or other, he put a stop to all the play, Epimetheus judged it best to go back to Pandora, who was in a humor better suited to his own. But, with a hope of giving her pleasure, he gathered some flowers, and made them into a wreath, which he meant to put upon her head. The flowers were very lovely, — roses, and lilies, and orange-blossoms, and a great many more, which left a trail of fragrance behind, as Epimetheus carried them along; and the wreath was put together with as much skill as could reasonably be expected of a boy. The fingers of little girls, it has always appeared to me, are the fittest to twine flower-wreaths; but boys could do it, in those days, rather better than they can now.

And here I must mention that a great black cloud had been gathering in the sky, for some time past, although it had not yet overspread the sun. But, just as Epimetheus reached the cottage door, this cloud began to intercept the sunshine, and thus to make a sudden and sad obscurity.

He entered softly; for he meant, if possible, to steal behind Pandora, and fling the wreath of flowers over her head, before she should be aware of his approach. But, as it happened, there was no need of his treading so very lightly. He might have trod as heavily as he pleased, — as heavily as a grown man, — as heavily, I was going to say, as an elephant, — without much

probability of Pandora's hearing his footsteps. She was too intent upon her purpose. At the moment of his entering the cottage, the naughty child had put her hand to the lid, and was on the point of opening the mysterious box. Epimetheus beheld her. If he had cried out, Pandora would probably have withdrawn her hand, and the fatal mystery of the box might never have been known.

But Epimetheus himself, although he said very little about it, had his own share of curiosity to know what was inside. Perceiving that Pandora was resolved to find out the secret, he determined that his playfellow should not be the only wise person in the cottage. And if there were anything pretty or valuable in the box, he meant to take half of it to himself. Thus, after all his sage speeches to Pandora about restraining her curiosity, Epimetheus turned out to be quite as foolish, and nearly as much in fault, as she. So, whenever we blame Pandora for what happened, we must not forget to shake our heads at Epimetheus likewise.

As Pandora raised the lid, the cottage grew very dark and dismal; for the black cloud had now swept quite over the sun, and seemed to have buried it alive. There had, for a little while past, been a low growling and muttering, which all at once broke into a heavy peal of thunder. But Pandora, heeding nothing of all this, lifted the lid nearly upright, and looked inside. It seemed as if a sudden swarm of winged creatures brushed past her, taking flight out of the box, while, at the same instant, she heard the voice of Epimetheus, with a lamentable tone, as if he were in pain.

"Oh, I am stung!" cried he. "I am stung! Naughty Pandora! why have you opened this wicked box?"

Pandora let fall the lid, and, starting up, looked about her, to see what had befallen Epimetheus. The thunder-cloud had so darkened the room that she could not very clearly discern what was in it. But she heard a disagreeable buzzing, as if a great many huge flies, or gigantic mosquitoes, or those insects which we call dor-bugs, and pinching-dogs, were darting about. And, as her eyes grew more accustomed to the imperfect light, she saw a crowd of ugly little shapes, with bats' wings, looking abominably spiteful, and armed with terribly long stings in their tails. It was one of these that had stung Epimetheus. Nor was it a great while before Pandora herself began to scream, in no less pain and affright than her playfellow, and making a vast deal more hubbub about it. An odious little monster had settled on her forehead, and would have stung her I know not how deeply, if Epimetheus had not run and brushed it away.

Now, if you wish to know what these ugly things might be, which had made their escape out of the box, I must tell you that they were the whole family of earthly Troubles. There were evil Passions; there were a great many species of Cares; there were more than a hundred and fifty Sorrows; there were Diseases, in a vast number of miserable and painful shapes; there were more kinds of Naughtiness than it would be of any use to talk about. In short, everything that has since afflicted the souls and bodies of mankind had been shut up in the mysterious box, and given to Epimetheus

and Pandora to be kept safely, in order that the happy children of the world might never be molested by them. Had they been faithful to their trust, all would have gone well. No grown person would ever have been sad, nor any child have had cause to shed a single tear, from that hour until this moment.

But — and you may see by this how a wrong act of any one mortal is a calamity to the whole world — by Pandora's lifting the lid of that miserable box, and by the fault of Epimetheus, too, in not preventing her, these Troubles have obtained a foothold among us, and do not seem very likely to be driven away in a hurry. For it was impossible, as you will easily guess, that the two children should keep the ugly swarm in their own little cottage. On the contrary, the first thing that they did was to fling open the doors and windows, in hopes of getting rid of them; and, sure enough, away flew the winged Troubles all abroad, and so pestered and tormented the small people, everywhere about, that none of them so much as smiled for many days afterwards. And, what was very singular, all the flowers and dewy blossoms on earth, not one of which had hitherto faded, now began to droop and shed their leaves, after a day or two. The children, moreover, who before seemed immortal in their childhood, now grew older, day by day, and came soon to be youths and maidens, and men and women by and by, and aged people, before they dreamed of such a thing.

Meanwhile, the naughty Pandora, and hardly less naughty Epimetheus, remained in their cottage. Both

of them had been grievously stung, and were in a good deal of pain, which seemed the more intolerable to them, because it was the very first pain that had ever been felt since the world began. Of course, they were entirely unaccustomed to it, and could have no idea what it meant. Besides all this, they were in exceedingly bad humor, both with themselves and with one another. In order to indulge it to the utmost, Epimetheus sat down sullenly in a corner with his back towards Pandora; while Pandora flung herself upon the floor and rested her head on the fatal and abominable box. She was crying bitterly, and sobbing as if her heart would break.

Suddenly there was a gentle little tap on the inside of the lid.

"What can that be?" cried Pandora, lifting her head.

But either Epimetheus had not heard the tap, or was too much out of humor to notice it. At any rate, he made no answer.

"You are very unkind," said Pandora, sobbing anew, "not to speak to me!"

Again the tap! It sounded like the tiny knuckles of a fairy's hand, knocking lightly and playfully on the inside of the box.

"Who are you?" asked Pandora, with a little of her former curiosity. "Who are you, inside of this naughty box?"

A sweet little voice spoke from within, —

"Only lift the lid, and you shall see."

"No, no," answered Pandora, again beginning to sob, "I have had enough of lifting the lid. You are

inside of the box, naughty creature, and there you shall stay! There are plenty of your ugly brothers and sisters already flying about the world. You need never think that I shall be so foolish as to let you out!"

She looked towards Epimetheus, as she spoke, perhaps expecting that he would commend her for her wisdom. But the sullen boy only muttered that she was wise a little too late.

"Ah," said the sweet little voice again, "you had much better let me out. I am not like those naughty creatures that have stings in their tails. They are no brothers and sisters of mine, as you would see at once, if you were only to get a glimpse of me. Come, come, my pretty Pandora! I am sure you will let me out!"

And, indeed, there was a kind of cheerful witchery in the tone, that made it almost impossible to refuse anything which this little voice asked. Pandora's heart had insensibly grown lighter, at every word that came from within the box. Epimetheus, too, though still in the corner, had turned half round, and seemed to be in rather better spirits than before.

"My dear Epimetheus," cried Pandora, "have you heard this little voice?"

"Yes, to be sure I have," answered he, but in no very good humor as yet. "And what of it?"

"Shall I lift the lid again?" asked Pandora.

"Just as you please," said Epimetheus. "You have done so much mischief already, that perhaps you may as well do a little more. One other Trouble, in such a swarm as you have set adrift about the world, can make no very great difference."

"You might speak a little more kindly!" murmured Pandora, wiping her eyes.

"Ah, naughty boy!" cried the little voice within the box, in an arch and laughing tone. "He knows he is longing to see me. Come, my dear Pandora, lift up the lid. I am in a great hurry to comfort you. Only let me have some fresh air, and you shall soon see that matters are not quite so dismal as you think them!"

"Epimetheus," exclaimed Pandora, "come what may, I am resolved to open the box!"

"And, as the lid seems very heavy," cried Epimetheus, running across the room, "I will help you!"

So, with one consent, the two children again lifted the lid. Out flew a sunny and smiling little personage, and hovered about the room, throwing a light wherever she went. Have you never made the sunshine dance into dark corners, by reflecting it from a bit of looking-glass? Well, so looked the winged cheerfulness of this fairy-like stranger, amid the gloom of the cottage. She flew to Epimetheus, and laid the least touch of her finger on the inflamed spot where the Trouble had stung him, and immediately the anguish of it was gone. Then she kissed Pandora on the forehead, and her hurt was cured likewise.

After performing these good offices, the bright stranger fluttered sportively over the children's heads, and looked so sweetly at them, that they both began to think it not so very much amiss to have opened the box, since, otherwise, their cheery guest must have been kept a prisoner among those naughty imps with stings in their tails.

"Pray, who are you, beautiful creature?" inquired Pandora.

"I am to be called Hope!" answered the sunshiny figure. "And because I am such a cheery little body, I was packed into the box, to make amends to the human race for that swarm of ugly Troubles, which was destined to be let loose among them. Never fear! we shall do pretty well in spite of them all."

"Your wings are colored like the rainbow!" exclaimed Pandora. "How very beautiful!"

"Yes, they are like the rainbow," said Hope, "because, glad as my nature is, I am partly made of tears as well as smiles."

"And will you stay with us," asked Epimetheus, "forever and ever?"

"As long as you need me," said Hope, with her pleasant smile, — "and that will be as long as you live in the world, — I promise never to desert you. There may come times and seasons, now and then, when you will think that I have utterly vanished. But again, and again, and again, when perhaps you least dream of it, you shall see the glimmer of my wings on the ceiling of your cottage. Yes, my dear children, and I know something very good and beautiful that is to be given you hereafter!"

"Oh tell us," they exclaimed, — "tell us what it is!"

"Do not ask me," replied Hope, putting her finger on her rosy mouth. "But do not despair, even if it should never happen while you live on this earth. Trust in my promise, for it is true."

"We do trust you!" cried Epimetheus and Pandora, both in one breath.

And so they did; and not only they, but so has everybody trusted Hope, that has since been alive. And to tell you the truth, I cannot help being glad — (though, to be sure, it was an uncommonly naughty thing for her to do) — but I cannot help being glad that our foolish Pandora peeped into the box. No doubt — no doubt — the Troubles are still flying about the world, and have increased in multitude, rather than lessened, and are a very ugly set of imps, and carry most venomous stings in their tails. I have felt them already, and expect to feel them more, as I grow older. But then that lovely and lightsome little figure of Hope! What in the world could we do without her? Hope spiritualizes the earth; Hope makes it always new; and, even in the earth's best and brightest aspect, Hope shows it to be only the shadow of an infinite bliss hereafter!

THE DRAGON'S TEETH

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

CADMUS, Phœnix, and Cilix, the three sons of King Agenor, and their little sister Europa (who was a very beautiful child) were at play together, near the seashore, in their father's kingdom of Phœnicia. They had rambled to some distance from the palace where their parents dwelt, and were now in a verdant meadow, on one side of which lay the sea, all sparkling and dimpling in the sunshine, and murmuring gently against the beach. The three boys were very happy, gathering flowers, and twining them into garlands, with which they adorned the little Europa. Seated on the grass, the child was almost hidden under an abundance of buds and blossoms, whence her rosy face peeped merrily out, and, as Cadmus said, was the prettiest of all the flowers.

Just then, there came a splendid butterfly, fluttering along the meadow; and Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix set off in pursuit of it, crying out that it was a flower with wings. Europa, who was a little wearied with playing all day long, did not chase the butterfly with her brothers, but sat still where they had left her, and closed her eyes. For a while, she listened to the pleasant murmur of the sea, which was like a voice saying "Hush!" and bidding her go to sleep. But the

pretty child, if she slept at all, could not have slept more than a moment, when she heard something trample on the grass, not far from her, and peeping out from the heap of flowers, beheld a snow-white bull.

And whence could this bull have come? Europa and her brothers had been a long time playing in the meadow, and had seen no cattle, nor other living thing, either there or on the neighboring hills.

"Brother Cadmus!" cried Europa, starting up out of the midst of the roses and lilies. "Phœnix! Cilix! Where are you all? Help! Help! Come and drive away this bull!"

But her brothers were too far off to hear; especially as the fright took away Europa's voice, and hindered her from calling very loudly. So there she stood, with her pretty mouth wide open, as pale as the white lilies that were twisted among the other flowers in her garlands.

Nevertheless, it was the suddenness with which she had perceived the bull, rather than anything frightful in his appearance, that caused Europa so much alarm. On looking at him more attentively, she began to see that he was a beautiful animal, and even fancied a particularly amiable expression in his face. As for his breath, — the breath of cattle, you know, is always sweet, — it was as fragrant as if he had been grazing on no other food than rosebuds, or, at least, the most delicate of clover-blossoms. Never before did a bull have such bright and tender eyes, and such smooth horns of ivory, as this one. And the bull ran little races, and capered sportively around the child; so that

she quite forgot how big and strong he was, and, from the gentleness and playfulness of his actions, soon came to consider him as innocent a creature as a pet lamb.

Thus, frightened as she at first was, you might by and by have seen Europa stroking the bull's forehead with her small white hand, and taking the garlands off her own head to hang them on his neck and ivory horns. Then she pulled up some blades of grass, and he ate them out of her hand, not as if he were hungry, but because he wanted to be friends with the child, and took pleasure in eating what she had touched. Well, my stars! was there ever such a gentle, sweet, pretty, and amiable creature as this bull, and ever such a nice playmate for a little girl?

When the animal saw (for the bull had so much intelligence that it is really wonderful to think of), when he saw that Europa was no longer afraid of him, he grew overjoyed, and could hardly contain himself for delight. He frisked about the meadow, now here, now there, making sprightly leaps, with as little effort as a bird expends in hopping from twig to twig. Indeed, his motion was as light as if he were flying through the air, and his hoofs seemed hardly to leave their print in the grassy soil over which he trod. With his spotless hue, he resembled a snow-drift, wafted along by the wind. Once he galloped so far away that Europa feared lest she might never see him again; so, setting up her childish voice, she called him back.

"Come back, pretty creature!" she cried. "Here is a nice clover-blossom."

And then it was delightful to witness the gratitude of this amiable bull, and how he was so full of joy and thankfulness that he capered higher than ever. He came running, and bowed his head before Europa, as if he knew her to be a king's daughter, or else recognized the important truth that a little girl is everybody's queen. And not only did the bull bend his neck, he absolutely knelt down at her feet, and made such intelligent nods, and other inviting gestures, that Europa understood what he meant just as well as if he had put it in so many words.

"Come, dear child," was what he wanted to say, "let me give you a ride on my back."

At the first thought of such a thing, Europa drew back. But then she considered in her wise little head that there could be no possible harm in taking just one gallop on the back of this docile and friendly animal, who would certainly set her down the very instant she desired it. And how it would surprise her brothers to see her riding across the green meadow! And what merry times they might have, either taking turns for a gallop, or clambering on the gentle creature, all four children together, and careering round the field with shouts of laughter that would be heard as far off as King Agenor's palace!

"I think I will do it," said the child to herself.

And, indeed, why not? She cast a glance around, and caught a glimpse of Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, who were still in pursuit of the butterfly, almost at the other end of the meadow. It would be the quickest way of rejoining them, to get upon the white bull's

back. She came a step nearer to him, therefore; and — sociable creature that he was — he showed so much joy at this mark of her confidence, that the child could not find it in her heart to hesitate any longer. Making one bound (for this little princess was as active as a squirrel), there sat Europa on the beautiful bull, holding an ivory horn in each hand, lest she should fall off.

"Softly, pretty bull, softly!" she said, rather frightened at what she had done. "Do not gallop too fast."

Having got the child on his back, the animal gave a leap into the air, and came down so like a feather that Europa did not know when his hoofs touched the ground. He then began a race to that part of the flowery plain where her three brothers were, and where they had just caught their splendid butterfly. Europa screamed with delight; and Phœnix, Cilix, and Cadmus stood gaping at the spectacle of their sister mounted on a white bull, not knowing whether to be frightened or to wish the same good luck for themselves. The gentle and innocent creature (for who could possibly doubt that he was so?) pranced round among the children as sportively as a kitten. Europa all the while looked down upon her brothers, nodding and laughing, but yet with a sort of stateliness in her rosy little face. As the bull wheeled about to take another gallop across the meadow, the child waved her hand, and said, "Good-by," playfully pretending that she was now bound on a distant journey, and might not see her brothers again for nobody could tell how long.

"Good-by," shouted Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, all in one breath.

But, together with her enjoyment of the sport, there was still a little remnant of fear in the child's heart; so that her last look at the three boys was a troubled one, and made them feel as if their dear sister were really leaving them forever. And what do you think the snowy bull did next? Why, he set off, as swift as the wind, straight down to the sea-shore, scampered across the sand, took an airy leap, and plunged right in among the foaming billows. The white spray rose in a shower over him and the little Europa, and fell spattering down upon the water.

Then what a scream of terror did the poor child send forth! The three brothers screamed manfully, likewise, and ran to the shore as fast as their legs would carry them, with Cadmus at their head. But it was too late. When they reached the margin of the sand, the treacherous animal was already far away in the wide blue sea, with only his snowy head and tail emerging, and poor little Europa between them, stretching out one hand towards her dear brothers, while she grasped the bull's ivory horn with the other. And there stood Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, gazing at this sad spectacle, through their tears, until they could no longer distinguish the bull's snowy head from the white-capped billows that seemed to boil up out of the sea's depths around him. Nothing more was ever seen of the white bull, — nothing more of the beautiful child.

This was a mournful story, as you may well think, for the three boys to carry home to their parents. King Agenor, their father, was the ruler of the whole

country; but he loved his little daughter Europa better than his kingdom, or than all his other children, or than anything else in the world. Therefore, when Cadmus and his two brothers came crying home, and told him how that a white bull had carried off their sister, and swam with her over the sea, the king was quite beside himself with grief and rage. Although it was now twilight, and fast growing dark, he bade them set out instantly in search of her.

"Never shall you see my face again," he cried, "unless you bring me back my little Europa, to gladden me with her smiles and her pretty ways. Begone, and enter my presence no more, till you come leading her by the hand."

As King Agenor said this, his eyes flashed fire (for he was a very passionate king), and he looked so terribly angry that the poor boys did not even venture to ask for their suppers, but slunk away out of the palace, and only paused on the steps a moment to consult whither they should go first. While they were standing there, all in dismay, their mother, Queen Telephassa (who happened not to be by when they told the story to the king), came hurrying after them, and said that she too would go in quest of her daughter.

"Oh no, mother!" cried the boys. "The night is dark, and there is no knowing what troubles and perils we may meet with."

"Alas! my dear children," answered poor Queen Telephassa, weeping bitterly, "that is only another reason why I should go with you. If I should lose you, too, as well as my little Europa, what would become of me?"

"And let me go likewise!" said their playfellow Thasus, who came running to join them.

Thasus was the son of a seafaring person in the neighborhood; he had been brought up with the young princes, and was their intimate friend, and loved Europa very much; so they consented that he should accompany them. The whole party, therefore, set forth together; Cadmus, Phœnix, Cilix, and Thasus clustered round Queen Telephassa, grasping her skirts, and begging her to lean upon their shoulders whenever she felt weary. In this manner they went down the palace steps, and began a journey which turned out to be a great deal longer than they dreamed of. The last that they saw of King Agenor, he came to the door, with a servant holding a torch beside him, and called after them into the gathering darkness: —

"Remember! Never ascend these steps again without the child!"

"Never!" sobbed Queen Telephassa; and the three brothers and Thasus answered, "Never! Never! Never! Never!"

And they kept their word. Year after year King Agenor sat in the solitude of his beautiful palace, listening in vain for their returning footsteps, hoping to hear the familiar voice of the queen, and the cheerful talk of his sons and their playfellow Thasus, entering the door together, and the sweet, childish accents of little Europa in the midst of them. But so long a time went by, that, at last, if they had really come, the king would not have known that this was the voice of Telephassa, and these the younger voices that used to make

such joyful echoes when the children were playing about the palace. We must now leave King Agenor to sit on his throne, and must go along with Queen Telephassa and her four youthful companions.

They went on and on, and traveled a long way, and passed over mountains and rivers, and sailed over seas. Here, and there, and everywhere, they made continual inquiry if any person could tell them what had become of Europa. The rustic people, of whom they asked this question, paused a little while from their labors in the field, and looked very much surprised. They thought it strange to behold a woman in the garb of a queen (for Telephassa, in her haste, had forgotten to take off her crown and her royal robes), roaming about the country, with four lads around her, on such an errand as this seemed to be. But nobody could give them any tidings of Europa; nobody had seen a little girl dressed like a princess, and mounted on a snow-white bull, which galloped as swiftly as the wind.

I cannot tell you how long Queen Telephassa, and Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, her three sons, and Thasus, their playfellow, went wandering along the highways and bypaths, or through the pathless wildernesses of the earth, in this manner. But certain it is, that, before they reached any place of rest, their splendid garments were quite worn out. They all looked very much travel-stained, and would have had the dust of many countries on their shoes, if the streams, through which they waded, had not washed it all away. When they had been gone a year, Telephassa threw away her crown, because it chafed her forehead.

"It has given me many a headache," said the poor queen, "and it cannot cure my heartache."

As fast as their princely robes got torn and tattered, they exchanged them for such mean attire as ordinary people wore. By and by they came to have a wild and homeless aspect; so that you would much sooner have taken them for a gypsy family than a queen and three princes, and a young nobleman, who had once a palace for their home, and a train of servants to do their bidding. The four boys grew up to be tall young men, with sunburnt faces. Each of them girded on a sword, to defend themselves against the perils of the way. When the husbandmen at whose farm-houses they sought hospitality needed their assistance in the harvest-field, they gave it willingly; and Queen Telephassa (who had done no work in her palace, save to braid silk threads with golden ones) came behind them to bind the sheaves. If payment was offered, they shook their heads, and only asked for tidings of Europa.

"There are bulls enough in my pasture," the old farmers would reply; "but I never heard of one like this you tell me of. A snow-white bull with a little princess on his back! Ho! ho! I ask your pardon, good folks; but there never was such a sight seen hereabouts."

At last, when his upper lip began to have the down on it, Phœnix grew weary of rambling hither and thither to no purpose. So, one day, when they happened to be passing through a pleasant and solitary tract of country, he sat himself down on a heap of moss.

"I can go no farther," said Phœnix. "It is a mere

foolish waste of life to spend it, as we do, in always wandering up and down, and never coming to any home at nightfall. Our sister is lost, and never will be found. She probably perished in the sea; or, to whatever shore the white bull may have carried her, it is now so many years ago, that there would be neither love nor acquaintance between us should we meet again. My father has forbidden us to return to his palace; so I shall build me a hut of branches, and dwell here."

"Well, son Phœnix," said Telephassa, sorrowfully, "you have grown to be a man, and must do as you judge best. But, for my part, I will still go in quest of my poor child."

"And we three will go along with you!" cried Cadmus and Cilix and their faithful friend Thasus.

But, before setting out, they all helped Phœnix to build a habitation. When completed, it was a sweet rural bower, roofed overhead with an arch of living boughs. Inside there were two pleasant rooms, one of which had a soft heap of moss for a bed, while the other was furnished with a rustic seat or two, curiously fashioned out of the crooked roots of trees. So comfortable and homelike did it seem, that Telephassa and her three companions could not help sighing, to think that they must still roam about the world, instead of spending the remainder of their lives in some such cheerful abode as they had here built for Phœnix. But, when they bade him farewell, Phœnix shed tears, and probably regretted that he was no longer to keep them company.

However, he had fixed upon an admirable place to dwell in. And by and by there came other people, who chanced to have no homes; and, seeing how pleasant a spot it was, they built themselves huts in the neighborhood of Phœnix's habitation. Thus, before many years went by, a city had grown up there, in the centre of which was seen a stately palace of marble, wherein dwelt Phœnix, clothed in a purple robe, and wearing a golden crown upon his head. For the inhabitants of the new city, finding that he had royal blood in his veins, had chosen him to be their king. The very first decree of state which King Phœnix issued was, that if a maiden happened to arrive in the kingdom, mounted on a snow-white bull, and calling herself Europa, his subjects should treat her with the greatest kindness and respect, and immediately bring her to the palace. You may see, by this, that Phœnix's conscience never quite ceased to trouble him for giving up the quest of his dear sister, and sitting himself down to be comfortable, while his mother and her companions went onward.

But often and often, at the close of a weary day's journey, did Telephassa and Cadmus, Cilix and Thasus, remember the pleasant spot in which they had left Phœnix. It was a sorrowful prospect for these wanderers, that on the morrow they must again set forth, and that, after many nightfalls, they would perhaps be no nearer the close of their toilsome pilgrimage than now. These thoughts made them all melancholy at times, but appeared to torment Cilix more than the rest of the party. At length, one morning,

when they were taking their staffs in hand to set out, he thus addressed them: —

"My dear mother, and you good brother Cadmus, and my friend Thasus, methinks we are like people in a dream. There is no substance in the life which we are leading. It is such a dreary length of time since the white bull carried off my sister Europa, that I have quite forgotten how she looked, and the tones of her voice, and, indeed, almost doubt whether such a little girl ever lived in the world. And whether she once lived or no, I am convinced that she no longer survives, and that therefore it is the merest folly to waste our own lives and happiness in seeking her. Were we to find her, she would now be a woman grown, and would look upon us all as strangers. So, to tell you the truth, I have resolved to take up my abode here; and I entreat you, mother, brother, and friend, to follow my example."

"Not I, for one," said Telephassa, although the poor queen, firmly as she spoke, was so travel-worn that she could hardly put her foot to the ground, — "not I, for one! In the depths of my heart, little Europa is still the rosy child who ran to gather flowers so many years ago. She has not grown to womanhood, nor forgotten me. At noon, at night, journeying onward, sitting down to rest, her childish voice is always in my ears, calling, 'Mother! mother!' Stop here who may, there is no repose for me."

"Nor for me," said Cadmus, "while my dear mother pleases to go onward."

And the faithful Thasus, too, was resolved to bear

them company. They remained with Cilix a few days, however, and helped him to build a rustic bower, resembling the one which they had formerly built for Phœnix.

When they were bidding him farewell, Cilix burst into tears, and told his mother that it seemed just as melancholy a dream to stay there, in solitude, as to go onward. If she really believed that they would ever find Europa, he was willing to continue the search with them, even now. But Telephassa bade him remain there, and be happy, if his own heart would let him. So the pilgrims took their leave of him, and departed, and were hardly out of sight before some other wandering people came along that way, and saw Cilix's habitation, and were greatly delighted with the appearance of the place. There being abundance of unoccupied ground in the neighborhood, these strangers built huts for themselves, and were soon joined by a multitude of new settlers, who quickly formed a city. In the middle of it was seen a magnificent palace of colored marble, on the balcony of which, every noontide, appeared Cilix, in a long purple robe, and with a jeweled crown upon his head; for the inhabitants, when they found out that he was a king's son, had considered him the fittest of all men to be a king himself.

One of the first acts of King Cilix's government was to send out an expedition, consisting of a grave ambassador and an escort of bold and hardy young men, with orders to visit the principal kingdoms of the earth, and inquire whether a young maiden had passed through those regions, galloping swiftly on a

white bull. It is, therefore, plain to my mind, that Cilix secretly blamed himself for giving up the search for Europa, as long as he was able to put one foot before the other.

As for Telephassa, and Cadmus, and the good Thasus, it grieves me to think of them, still keeping up that weary pilgrimage. The two young men did their best for the poor queen, helping her over the rough places, often carrying her across rivulets in their faithful arms, and seeking to shelter her at nightfall, even when they themselves lay on the ground. Sad, sad it was to hear them asking of every passer-by if he had seen Europa, so long after the white bull had carried her away. But, though the gray years thrust themselves between, and made the child's figure dim in their remembrance, neither of these true-hearted three ever dreamed of giving up the search.

One morning, however, poor Thasus found that he had sprained his ankle, and could not possibly go a step farther.

"After a few days, to be sure," said he, mournfully, "I might make shift to hobble along with a stick. But that would only delay you, and perhaps hinder you from finding dear little Europa, after all your pains and trouble. Do you go forward, therefore, my beloved companions, and leave me to follow as I may."

"Thou hast been a true friend, dear Thasus," said Queen Telephassa, kissing his forehead. "Being neither my son nor the brother of our lost Europa, thou hast shown thyself truer to me and her than Phœnix and Cilix did, whom we have left behind us. With-

out thy loving help, and that of my son Cadmus, my limbs could not have borne me half so far as this. Now, take thy rest, and be at peace. For — and it is the first time I have owned it to myself — I begin to question whether we shall ever find my beloved daughter in this world."

Saying this, the poor queen shed tears, because it was a grievous trial to the mother's heart to confess that her hopes were growing faint. From that day forward, Cadmus noticed that she never traveled with the same alacrity of spirit that had heretofore supported her. Her weight was heavier upon his arm.

Before setting out, Cadmus helped Thasus build a bower; while Telephassa, being too infirm to give any great assistance, advised them how to fit it up and furnish it, so that it might be as comfortable as a hut of branches could. Thasus, however, did not spend all his days in this green bower. For it happened to him, as to Phœnix and Cilix, that other homeless people visited the spot and liked it, and built themselves habitations in the neighborhood. So here, in the course of a few years, was another thriving city with a red freestone palace in the centre of it, where Thasus sat upon a throne, doing justice to the people, with a purple robe over his shoulders, a sceptre in his hand, and a crown upon his head. The inhabitants had made him king, not for the sake of any royal blood (for none was in his veins), but because Thasus was an upright, true-hearted, and courageous man, and therefore fit to rule.

But, when the affairs of his kingdom were all settled,

King Thasus laid aside his purple robe, and crown, and sceptre, and bade his worthiest subject distribute justice to the people in his stead. Then, grasping the pilgrim's staff that had supported him so long, he set forth again, hoping still to discover some hoof-mark of the snow-white bull, some trace of the vanished child. He returned, after a lengthened absence, and sat down wearily upon his throne. To his latest hour, nevertheless, King Thasus showed his true-hearted remembrance of Europa, by ordering that a fire should always be kept burning in his palace, and a bath steaming hot, and food ready to be served up, and a bed with snow-white sheets, in case the maiden should arrive, and require immediate refreshment. And though Europa never came, the good Thasus had the blessings of many a poor traveler, who profited by the food and lodging which were meant for the little playmate of the king's boyhood.

Telephassa and Cadmus were now pursuing their weary way, with no companion but each other. The queen leaned heavily upon her son's arm, and could walk only a few miles a day. But for all her weakness and weariness, she would not be persuaded to give up the search. It was enough to bring tears into the eyes of bearded men to hear the melancholy tone with which she inquired of every stranger whether he could tell her any news of the lost child.

"Have you seen a little girl — no, no, I mean a young maiden of full growth — passing by this way, mounted on a snow-white bull, which gallops as swiftly as the wind?"

"We have seen no such wondrous sight," the people would reply; and very often, taking Cadmus aside, they whispered to him, "Is this stately and sad-looking woman your mother? Surely she is not in her right mind; and you ought to take her home, and make her comfortable, and do your best to get this dream out of her fancy."

"It is no dream," said Cadmus. "Everything else is a dream, save that."

But, one day, Telephassa seemed feebler than usual, and leaned almost her whole weight on the arm of Cadmus, and walked more slowly than ever before. At last they reached a solitary spot, where she told her son that she must needs lie down, and take a good, long rest.

"A good, long rest!" she repeated, looking Cadmus tenderly in the face, — "a good, long rest, thou dearest one!"

"As long as you please, dear mother," answered Cadmus.

Telephassa bade him sit down on the turf beside her, and then she took his hand.

"My son," said she, fixing her dim eyes most lovingly upon him, "this rest that I speak of will be very long indeed! You must not wait till it is finished. Dear Cadmus, you do not comprehend me. You must make a grave here, and lay your mother's weary frame into it. My pilgrimage is over."

Cadmus burst into tears, and, for a long time, refused to believe that his dear mother was now to be taken from him. But Telephassa reasoned with him,

and kissed him, and at length made him discern that it was better for her spirit to pass away out of the toil, the weariness, the grief, and disappointment which had burdened her on earth, ever since the child was lost. He therefore repressed his sorrow, and listened to her last words.

"Dearest Cadmus," said she, "thou hast been the truest son that ever mother had, and faithful to the very last. Who else would have borne with my infirmities as thou hast! It is owing to thy care, thou tenderest child, that my grave was not dug long years ago, in some valley or on some hillside that lies far, far behind us. It is enough. Thou shalt wander no more on this hopeless search. But when thou hast laid thy mother in the earth, then go, my son, to Delphi, and inquire of the oracle what thou shalt do next."

"O mother, mother," cried Cadmus, "couldst thou but have seen my sister before this hour!"

"It matters little now," answered Telephassa, and there was a smile upon her face. "I go now to the better world, and, sooner or later, shall find my daughter there."

I will not sadden you, my little hearers, with telling how Telephassa died and was buried, but will only say, that her dying smile grew brighter, instead of vanishing from her dead face; so that Cadmus felt convinced that, at her very first step into the better world, she had caught Europa in her arms. He planted some flowers on his mother's grave, and left them to grow there, and make the place beautiful, when he should be far away.

After performing this last sorrowful duty, he set forth alone, and took the road towards the famous oracle of Delphi, as Telephassa had advised him. On his way thither, he still inquired of most people whom he met whether they had seen Europa; for, to say the truth, Cadmus had grown so accustomed to ask the question, that it came to his lips as readily as a remark about the weather. He received various answers. Some told him one thing, and some another. Among the rest, a mariner affirmed that, many years before, in a distant country, he had heard a rumor about a white bull, which came swimming across the sea with a child on his back, dressed up in flowers that were blighted by the sea-water. He did not know what had become of the child or the bull; and Cadmus suspected, indeed, by a queer twinkle in the mariner's eyes, that he was putting a joke upon him, and had never really heard anything about the matter.

Poor Cadmus found it more wearisome to travel alone than to bear all his dear mother's weight while she had kept him company. His heart, you will understand, was now so heavy that it seemed impossible, sometimes, to carry it any farther. But his limbs were strong and active, and well accustomed to exercise. He walked swiftly along, thinking of King Agenor and Queen Telephassa, and his brothers, and the friendly Thasus, all of whom he had left behind him, at one point of his pilgrimage or another, and never expected to see them any more. Full of these remembrances, he came within sight of a lofty mountain, which the people thereabouts told him was called

Parnassus. On the slope of Mount Parnassus was the famous Delphi, whither Cadmus was going.

This Delphi was supposed to be the very midmost spot of the whole world. The place of the oracle was a certain cavity in the mountain-side, over which, when Cadmus came thither, he found a rude bower of branches. It reminded him of those which he had helped to build for Phœnix and Cilix, and afterwards for Thasus. In later times, when multitudes of people came from great distances to put questions to the oracle, a spacious temple of marble was erected over the spot. But in the days of Cadmus, as I have told you, there was only this rustic bower, with its abundance of green foliage, and a tuft of shrubbery, that ran wild over the mysterious hole in the hill-side.

When Cadmus had thrust a passage through the tangled boughs, and made his way into the bower, he did not at first discern the half-hidden cavity. But soon he felt a cold stream of air rushing out of it, with so much force that it shook the ringlets on his cheek. Pulling away the shrubbery which clustered over the hole, he bent forward, and spoke in a distinct but reverential tone, as if addressing some unseen personage inside of the mountain.

"Sacred oracle of Delphi," said he, "whither shall I go next in quest of my dear sister Europa?"

There was at first a deep silence, and then a rushing sound, or a noise like a long sigh, proceeding out of the interior of the earth. This cavity, you must know, was looked upon as a sort of fountain of truth, which sometimes gushed out in audible words; although, for

the most part, these words were such a riddle that they might just as well have stayed at the bottom of the hole. But Cadmus was more fortunate than many others who went to Delphi in search of truth. By and by, the rushing noise began to sound like articulate language. It repeated, over and over again, the following sentence, which, after all, was so like the vague whistle of a blast of air, that Cadmus really did not quite know whether it meant anything or not: —

"Seek her no more! Seek her no more! Seek her no more!"

"What, then, shall I do?" asked Cadmus.

For, ever since he was a child, you know, it had been the great object of his life to find his sister. From the very hour that he left following the butterfly in the meadow, near his father's palace, he had done his best to follow Europa, over land and sea. And now, if he must give up the search, he seemed to have no more business in the world.

But again the sighing gust of air grew into something like a hoarse voice.

"Follow the cow!" it said. "Follow the cow! Follow the cow!"

And when these words had been repeated until Cadmus was tired of hearing them (especially as he could not imagine what cow it was, or why he was to follow her), the gusty hole gave vent to another sentence.

"Where the stray cow lies down, there is your home."

These words were pronounced but a single time, and died away into a whisper before Cadmus was fully satisfied that he had caught the meaning. He put other

questions, but received no answer; only the gust of wind sighed continually out of the cavity, and blew the withered leaves rustling along the ground before it.

"Did there really come any words out of the hole?" thought Cadmus; "or have I been dreaming all this while?"

He turned away from the oracle, and thought himself no wiser than when he came thither. Caring little what might happen to him, he took the first path that offered itself, and went along at a sluggish pace; for, having no object in view, nor any reason to go one way more than another, it would certainly have been foolish to make haste. Whenever he met anybody, the old question was at his tongue's end: —

"Have you seen a beautiful maiden, dressed like a king's daughter, and mounted on a snow-white bull that gallops as swiftly as the wind?"

But, remembering what the oracle had said, he only half uttered the words, and then mumbled the rest indistinctly; and from his confusion, people must have imagined that this handsome young man had lost his wits.

I know not how far Cadmus had gone, nor could he himself have told you, when, at no great distance before him, he beheld a brindled cow. She was lying down by the wayside, and quietly chewing her cud; nor did she take any notice of the young man until he had approached pretty nigh. Then, getting leisurely upon her feet, and giving her head a gentle toss, she began to move along at a moderate pace, often pausing just long enough to crop a mouthful of grass. Cad-

mus loitered behind, whistling idly to himself, and scarcely noticing the cow; until the thought occurred to him, whether this could possibly be the animal which, according to the oracle's response, was to serve him for a guide. But he smiled at himself for fancying such a thing. He could not seriously think that this was the cow, because she went along so quietly, behaving just like any other cow. Evidently she neither knew nor cared so much as a wisp of hay about Cadmus, and was only thinking how to get her living along the wayside, where the herbage was green and fresh. Perhaps she was going home to be milked.

"Cow, cow, cow!" cried Cadmus. "Hey, Brindle, hey! Stop, my good cow."

He wanted to come up with the cow, so as to examine her, and see if she would appear to know him, or whether there were any peculiarities to distinguish her from a thousand other cows, whose only business is to fill the milk-pail, and sometimes kick it over. But still the brindled cow trudged on, whisking her tail to keep the flies away, and taking as little notice of Cadmus as she well could. If he walked slowly, so did the cow, and seized the opportunity to graze. If he quickened his pace, the cow went just so much the faster; and once, when Cadmus tried to catch her by running, she threw out her heels, stuck her tail straight on end, and set off at a gallop, looking as queerly as cows generally do while putting themselves to their speed.

When Cadmus saw that it was impossible to come up with her, he walked on moderately, as before. The

cow, too, went leisurely on, without looking behind. Wherever the grass was greenest, there she nibbled a mouthful or two. Where a brook glistened brightly across the path, there the cow drank, and breathed a comfortable sigh, and drank again, and trudged onward at the pace that best suited herself and Cadmus.

"I do believe," thought Cadmus, "that this may be the cow that was foretold me. If it be the one, I suppose she will lie down somewhere hereabouts."

Whether it were the oracular cow or some other one, it did not seem reasonable that she should travel a great way farther. So, whenever they reached a particularly pleasant spot on a breezy hillside, or in a sheltered vale, or flowery meadow, on the shore of a calm lake, or along the bank of a clear stream, Cadmus looked eagerly around to see if the situation would suit him for a home. But still, whether he liked the place or no, the brindled cow never offered to lie down. On she went at the quiet pace of a cow going homeward to the barn-yard; and, every moment, Cadmus expected to see a milkmaid approaching with a pail, or a herdsman running to head the stray animal, and turn her back towards the pasture. But no milkmaid came; no herdsman drove her back; and Cadmus followed the stray Brindle till he was almost ready to drop down with fatigue.

"O brindled cow," cried he, in a tone of despair, "do you never mean to stop?"

He had now grown too intent on following her to think of lagging behind, however long the way, and whatever might be his fatigue. Indeed, it seemed as if

there were something about the animal that bewitched people. Several persons who happened to see the brindled cow, and Cadmus following behind, began to trudge after her, precisely as he did. Cadmus was glad of somebody to converse with, and therefore talked very freely to these good people. He told them all his adventures, and how he had left King Agenor in his palace, and Phœnix at one place, and Cilix at another, and Thasus at a third, and his dear mother, Queen Telephassa, under a flowery sod; so that now he was quite alone, both friendless and homeless. He mentioned, likewise, that the oracle had bidden him be guided by a cow, and inquired of the strangers whether they supposed that this brindled animal could be the one.

"Why, 't is a very wonderful affair," answered one of his new companions. "I am pretty well acquainted with the ways of cattle, and I never knew a cow, of her own accord, to go so far without stopping. If my legs will let me, I'll never leave following the beast till she lies down."

"Nor I!" said a second.

"Nor I!" cried a third. "If she goes a hundred miles farther, I'm determined to see the end of it."

The secret of it was, you must know, that the cow was an enchanted cow, and that, without their being conscious of it, she threw some of her enchantment over everybody that took so much as half a dozen steps behind her. They could not possibly help following her, though, all the time, they fancied themselves doing it of their own accord. The cow was by

no means very nice in choosing her path; so that sometimes they had to scramble over rocks, or wade through mud and mire, and were all in a terribly bedraggled condition, and tired to death, and very hungry, into the bargain. What a weary business it was!

But still they kept trudging stoutly forward, and talking as they went. The strangers grew very fond of Cadmus, and resolved never to leave him, but to help him build a city wherever the cow might lie down. In the centre of it there should be a noble palace, in which Cadmus might dwell, and be their king, with a throne, a crown and sceptre, a purple robe, and everything else that a king ought to have; for in him there was the royal blood, and the royal heart, and the head that knew how to rule.

While they were talking of these schemes, and beguiling the tediousness of the way with laying out the plan of the new city, one of the company happened to look at the cow.

"Joy! joy!" cried he, clapping his hands. "Brindle is going to lie down."

They all looked; and, sure enough, the cow had stopped, and was staring leisurely about her, as other cows do when on the point of lying down. And slowly, slowly did she recline herself on the soft grass, first bending her fore legs, and then crouching her hind ones. When Cadmus and his companions came up with her, there was the brindled cow taking her ease, chewing her cud, and looking them quietly in the face; as if this was just the spot she had been seeking for, and as if it were all a matter of course.

"This, then," said Cadmus, gazing around him, "this is to be my home."

It was a fertile and lovely plain, with great trees flinging their sun-speckled shadows over it, and hills fencing it in from the rough weather. At no great distance, they beheld a river gleaming in the sunshine. A home feeling stole into the heart of poor Cadmus. He was very glad to know that here he might awake in the morning, without the necessity of putting on his dusty sandals to travel farther and farther. The days and the years would pass over him, and find him still in this pleasant spot. If he could have had his brothers with him, and his friend Thasus, and could have seen his dear mother under a roof of his own, he might here have been happy, after all their disappointments. Some day or other, too, his sister Europa might have come quietly to the door of his home, and smiled round upon the familiar faces. But, indeed, since there was no hope of regaining the friends of his boyhood, or ever seeing his dear sister again, Cadmus resolved to make himself happy with these new companions, who had grown so fond of him while following the cow.

"Yes, my friends," said he to them, "this is to be our home. Here we will build our habitations. The brindled cow, which has led us hither, will supply us with milk. We will cultivate the neighboring soil, and lead an innocent and happy life."

His companions joyfully assented to this plan; and, in the first place, being very hungry and thirsty, they looked about them for the means of providing a com-

fortable meal. Not far off, they saw a tuft of trees, which appeared as if there might be a spring of water beneath them. They went thither to fetch some, leaving Cadmus stretched on the ground along with the brindled cow; for, now that he had found a place of rest, it seemed as if all the weariness of his pilgrimage, ever since he left King Agenor's palace, had fallen upon him at once. But his new friends had not long been gone, when he was suddenly startled by cries, shouts, and screams, and the noise of a terrible struggle, and in the midst of it all, a most awful hissing, which went right through his ears like a rough saw.

Running towards the tuft of trees, he beheld the head and fiery eyes of an immense serpent or dragon, with the widest jaws that ever a dragon had, and a vast many rows of horribly sharp teeth. Before Cadmus could reach the spot, this pitiless reptile had killed his poor companions, and was busily devouring them, making but a mouthful of each man.

It appears that the fountain of water was enchanted, and that the dragon had been set to guard it, so that no mortal might ever quench his thirst there. As the neighboring inhabitants carefully avoided the spot, it was now a long time (not less than a hundred years, or thereabouts) since the monster had broken his fast; and, as was natural enough, his appetite had grown to be enormous, and was not half satisfied by the poor people whom he had just eaten up. When he caught sight of Cadmus, therefore, he set up another abominable hiss, and flung back his immense jaws, until his mouth looked like a great red cavern, at the farther end

of which were seen the legs of his last victim, whom he had hardly had time to swallow.

But Cadmus was so enraged at the destruction of his friends, that he cared neither for the size of the dragon's jaws nor for his hundreds of sharp teeth. Drawing his sword, he rushed at the monster, and flung himself right into his cavernous mouth. This bold method of attacking him took the dragon by surprise; for, in fact, Cadmus had leaped so far down into his throat that the rows of terrible teeth could not close upon him, nor do him the least harm in the world. Thus, though the struggle was a tremendous one, and though the dragon shattered the tuft of trees into small splinters by the lashing of his tail, yet, as Cadmus was all the while slashing and stabbing at his very vitals, it was not long before the scaly wretch bethought himself of slipping away. He had not gone his length, however, when the brave Cadmus gave him a sword-thrust that finished the battle; and, creeping out of the gateway of the creature's jaws, there he beheld him still wriggling his vast bulk, although there was no longer life enough in him to harm a little child.

But do not you suppose that it made Cadmus sorrowful to think of the melancholy fate which had befallen those poor, friendly people, who had followed the cow along with him? It seemed as if he were doomed to lose everybody whom he loved, or to see them perish in one way or another. And here he was, after all his toils and troubles, in a solitary place, with not a single human being to help him build a hut.

"What shall I do?" cried he aloud. "It were better

for me to have been devoured by the dragon, as my poor companions were."

"Cadmus," said a voice, — but whether it came from above or below him, or whether it spoke within his own breast, the young man could not tell, — "Cadmus, pluck out the dragon's teeth, and plant them in the earth."

This was a strange thing to do; nor was it very easy, I should imagine, to dig out all those deep-rooted fangs from the dead dragon's jaws. But Cadmus toiled and tugged, and after pounding the monstrous head almost to pieces with a great stone, he at last collected as many teeth as might have filled a bushel or two. The next thing was to plant them. This, likewise, was a tedious piece of work, especially as Cadmus was already exhausted with killing the dragon and knocking his head to pieces, and had nothing to dig the earth with, that I know of, unless it were his sword-blade. Finally, however, a sufficiently large tract of ground was turned up, and sown with this new kind of seed; although half of the dragon's teeth still remained to be planted some other day.

Cadmus, quite out of breath, stood leaning upon his sword, and wondering what was to happen next. He had waited but a few moments, when he began to see a sight which was as great a marvel as the most marvelous thing I ever told you about.

The sun was shining slantwise over the field, and showed all the moist, dark soil just like any other newly planted piece of ground. All at once, Cadmus fancied he saw something glisten very brightly, first at

one spot, then at another, and then at a hundred and a thousand spots together. Soon he perceived them to be the steel heads of spears, sprouting up everywhere like so many stalks of grain, and continually growing taller and taller. Next appeared a vast number of bright sword-blades, thrusting themselves up in the same way. A moment afterwards, the whole surface of the ground was broken up by a multitude of polished brass helmets, coming up like a crop of enormous beans. So rapidly did they grow, that Cadmus now discerned the fierce countenance of a man beneath every one. In short, before he had time to think what a wonderful affair it was, he beheld an abundant harvest of what looked like human beings armed with helmets and breastplates, shields, swords and spears; and before they were well out of the earth, they brandished their weapons, and clashed them one against another, seeming to think, little while as they had yet lived, that they had wasted too much of life without a battle. Every tooth of the dragon had produced one of these sons of deadly mischief.

Up sprouted, also, a great many trumpeters; and with the first breath that they drew, they put their brazen trumpets to their lips, and sounded a tremendous and ear-shattering blast; so that the whole space, just now so quiet and solitary, reverberated with the clash and clang of arms, the bray of warlike music, and the shouts of angry men. So enraged did they all look, that Cadmus fully expected them to put the whole world to the sword. How fortunate would it be for a great conqueror, if he could get a bushel of the dragon's teeth to sow!

"Cadmus," said the same voice which he had before heard, "throw a stone into the midst of the armed men."

So Cadmus seized a large stone, and, flinging it into the middle of the earth army, saw it strike the breastplate of a gigantic and fierce-looking warrior. Immediately on feeling the blow, he seemed to take it for granted that somebody had struck him; and, uplifting his weapon, he smote his next neighbor a blow that cleft his helmet asunder, and stretched him on the ground. In an instant, those nearest the fallen warrior began to strike at one another with their swords and stab with their spears. The confusion spread wider and wider. Each man smote down his brother, and was himself smitten down before he had time to exult in his victory. The trumpeters, all the while, blew their blasts shriller and shriller; each soldier shouted a battle-cry and often fell with it on his lips. It was the strangest spectacle of causeless wrath, and of mischief for no good end, that had ever been witnessed; but, after all, it was neither more foolish nor more wicked than a thousand battles that have since been fought, in which men have slain their brothers with just as little reason as these children of the dragon's teeth. It ought to be considered, too, that the dragon people were made for nothing else; whereas other mortals were born to love and help one another.

Well, this memorable battle continued to rage until the ground was strewn with helmeted heads that had been cut off. Of all the thousands that began the fight, there were only five left standing. These now rushed

from different parts of the field, and, meeting in the middle of it, clashed their swords, and struck at each other's hearts as fiercely as ever.

"Cadmus," said the voice again, "bid those five warriors sheathe their swords. They will help you to build the city."

Without hesitating an instant, Cadmus stepped forward, with the aspect of a king and a leader, and extending his drawn sword amongst them, spoke to the warriors in a stern and commanding voice.

"Sheathe your weapons!" said he.

And forthwith, feeling themselves bound to obey him, the five remaining sons of the dragon's teeth made him a military salute with their swords, returned them to the scabbards, and stood before Cadmus in a rank, eyeing him as soldiers eye their captain, while awaiting the word of command.

These five men had probably sprung from the biggest of the dragon's teeth, and were the boldest and strongest of the whole army. They were almost giants, indeed, and had good need to be so, else they never could have lived through so terrible a fight. They still had a very furious look, and, if Cadmus happened to glance aside, would glare at one another, with fire flashing out of their eyes. It was strange, too, to observe how the earth, out of which they had so lately grown, was incrusted, here and there, on their bright breastplates, and even begrimed their faces, just as you may have seen it clinging to beets and carrots when pulled out of their native soil. Cadmus hardly knew whether to consider them as men, or some odd kind of vegetable;

although, on the whole, he concluded that there was human nature in them, because they were so fond of trumpets and weapons, and so ready to shed blood.

They looked him earnestly in the face, waiting for his next order, and evidently desiring no other employment than to follow him from one battle-field to another, all over the wide world. But Cadmus was wiser than these earth-born creatures, with the dragon's fierceness in them, and knew better how to use their strength and hardihood.

"Come!" said he. "You are sturdy fellows. Make yourselves useful! Quarry some stones with those great swords of yours, and help me to build a city."

The five soldiers grumbled a little, and muttered that it was their business to overthrow cities, not to build them up. But Cadmus looked at them with a stern eye, and spoke to them in a tone of authority, so that they knew him for their master, and never again thought of disobeying his commands. They set to work in good earnest, and toiled so diligently, that, in a very short time, a city began to make its appearance. At first, to be sure, the workmen showed a quarrelsome disposition. Like savage beasts, they would doubtless have done one another a mischief, if Cadmus had not kept watch over them and quelled the fierce old serpent that lurked in their hearts, when he saw it gleaming out of their wild eyes. But, in course of time, they got accustomed to honest labor, and had sense enough to feel that there was more true enjoyment in living at peace, and doing good to one's neighbor, than in striking at him with a two-edged

sword. It may not be too much to hope that the rest of mankind will by and by grow as wise and peaceable as these five earth-begrimed warriors, who sprang from the dragon's teeth.

And now the city was built, and there was a home in it for each of the workmen. But the palace of Cadmus was not yet erected, because they had left it till the last, meaning to introduce all the new improvements of architecture, and make it very commodious, as well as stately and beautiful. After finishing the rest of their labors, they all went to bed betimes, in order to rise in the gray of the morning, and get at least the foundation of the edifice laid before nightfall. But, when Cadmus arose, and took his way towards the site where the palace was to be built, followed by his five sturdy workmen marching all in a row, what do you think he saw?

What should it be but the most magnificent palace that had ever been seen in the world? It was built of marble and other beautiful kinds of stone, and rose high into the air, with a splendid dome and a portico along the front, and carved pillars, and everything else that befitted the habitation of a mighty king. It had grown up out of the earth in almost as short a time as it had taken the armed host to spring from the dragon's teeth; and what made the matter more strange, no seed of this stately edifice had ever been planted.

When the five workmen beheld the dome, with the morning sunshine making it look golden and glorious, they gave a great shout.

"Long live King Cadmus," they cried, "in his beautiful palace!"

And the new king, with his five faithful followers at his heels, shouldering their pickaxes and marching in a rank (for they still had a soldier-like sort of behavior, as their nature was), ascended the palace steps. Halting at the entrance, they gazed through a long vista of lofty pillars that were ranged from end to end of a great hall. At the farther extremity of this hall, approaching slowly towards him, Cadmus beheld a female figure, wonderfully beautiful, and adorned with a royal robe, and a crown of diamonds over her golden ringlets, and the richest necklace that ever a queen wore. His heart thrilled with delight. He fancied it his long-lost sister Europa, now grown to womanhood, coming to make him happy, and to repay him, with her sweet sisterly affection, for all those weary wanderings in quest of her since he left King Agenor's palace, — for the tears that he had shed, on parting with Phœnix, and Cilix, and Thasus, — for the heart-breakings that had made the whole world seem dismal to him over his dear mother's grave.

But, as Cadmus advanced to meet the beautiful stranger, he saw that her features were unknown to him, although, in the little time that it required to tread along the hall, he had already felt a sympathy betwixt himself and her.

"No, Cadmus," said the same voice that had spoken to him in the field of the armed men, "this is not that dear sister Europa whom you have sought so faithfully all over the wide world. This is Harmonia, a daugh-

ter of the sky, who is given you instead of sister, and brothers, and friend, and mother. You will find all those dear ones in her alone."

So King Cadmus dwelt in the palace, with his new friend Harmonia, and found a great deal of comfort in his magnificent abode, but would doubtless have found as much, if not more, in the humblest cottage by the wayside. Before many years went by, there was a group of rosy little children (but how they came thither has always been a mystery to me) sporting in the great hall, and on the marble steps of the palace, and running joyfully to meet King Cadmus when affairs of state left him at leisure to play with them. They called him father, and Queen Harmonia mother. The five old soldiers of the dragon's teeth grew very fond of these small urchins, and were never weary of showing them how to shoulder sticks, flourish wooden swords, and march in military order, blowing a penny trumpet, or beating an abominable rub-a-dub upon a little drum.

But King Cadmus, lest there should be too much of the dragon's tooth in his children's disposition, used to find time from his kingly duties to teach them their A B C, — which he invented for their benefit, and for which many little people, I am afraid, are not half so grateful to him as they ought to be.

THE MINOTAUR

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

IN the old city of Trœzene, at the foot of a lofty mountain, there lived, a very long time ago, a little boy named Theseus. His grandfather, King Pittheus, was the sovereign of that country, and was reckoned a very wise man; so that Theseus, being brought up in the royal palace, and being naturally a bright lad, could hardly fail of profiting by the old king's instructions. His mother's name was Æthra. As for his father, the boy had never seen him. But, from his earliest remembrance, Æthra used to go with little Theseus into a wood, and sit down upon a moss-grown rock, which was deeply sunken into the earth. Here she often talked with her son about his father, and said that he was called Ægeus, and that he was a great king, and ruled over Attica, and dwelt at Athens, which was as famous a city as any in the world. Theseus was very fond of hearing about King Ægeus, and often asked his good mother Æthra why he did not come and live with them at Trœzene.

"Ah, my dear son," answered Æthra, with a sigh, "a monarch has his people to take care of. The men and women over whom he rules are in the place of children to him; and he can seldom spare time to love his own children as other parents do. Your father will

never be able to leave his kingdom for the sake of seeing his little boy."

"Well, but, dear mother," asked the boy, "why cannot I go to this famous city of Athens, and tell King Ægeus that I am his son?"

"That may happen by and by," said Æthra. "Be patient, and we shall see. You are not yet big and strong enough to set out on such an errand."

"And how soon shall I be strong enough?" Theseus persisted in inquiring.

"You are but a tiny boy as yet," replied his mother. "See if you can lift this rock on which we are sitting."

The little fellow had a great opinion of his own strength. So, grasping the rough protuberances of the rock, he tugged and toiled amain, and got himself quite out of breath, without being able to stir the heavy stone. It seemed to be rooted into the ground. No wonder he could not move it; for it would have taken all the force of a very strong man to lift it out of its earthy bed.

His mother stood looking on, with a sad kind of a smile on her lips and in her eyes, to see the zealous and yet puny efforts of her little boy. She could not help being sorrowful at finding him already so impatient to begin his adventures in the world.

"You see how it is, my dear Theseus," said she. "You must possess far more strength than now before I can trust you to go to Athens, and tell King Ægeus that you are his son. But when you can lift this rock, and show me what is hidden beneath it, I promise you my permission to depart."

Often and often, after this, did Theseus ask his mother whether it was yet time for him to go to Athens; and still his mother pointed to the rock, and told him that, for years to come, he could not be strong enough to move it. And again and again the rosy-cheeked and curly-headed boy would tug and strain at the huge mass of stone, striving, child as he was, to do what a giant could hardly have done without taking both of his great hands to the task. Meanwhile the rock seemed to be sinking farther and farther into the ground. The moss grew over it thicker and thicker, until at last it looked almost like a soft green seat, with only a few gray knobs of granite peeping out. The overhanging trees, also, shed their brown leaves upon it, as often as the autumn came; and at its base grew ferns and wild flowers, some of which crept quite over its surface. To all appearance, the rock was as firmly fastened as any other portion of the earth's substance.

But, difficult as the matter looked, Theseus was now growing up to be such a vigorous youth, that, in his own opinion, the time would quickly come when he might hope to get the upper hand of this ponderous lump of stone.

"Mother, I do believe it has started!" cried he, after one of his attempts. "The earth around it is certainly a little cracked!"

"No, no, child!" his mother hastily answered. "It is not possible you can have moved it, such a boy as you still are!"

Nor would she be convinced, although Theseus showed her the place where he fancied that the stem

of a flower had been partly uprooted by the movement of the rock. But Æthra sighed and looked disquieted; for, no doubt, she began to be conscious that her son was no longer a child, and that, in a little while hence, she must send him forth among the perils and troubles of the world.

It was not more than a year afterwards when they were again sitting on the moss-covered stone. Æthra had once more told him the oft-repeated story of his father, and how gladly he would receive Theseus at his stately palace, and how he would present him to his courtiers and the people, and tell them that here was the heir of his dominions. The eyes of Theseus glowed with enthusiasm, and he would hardly sit still to hear his mother speak.

"Dear mother Æthra," he exclaimed, "I never felt half so strong as now! I am no longer a child, nor a boy, nor a mere youth! I feel myself a man! It is now time to make one earnest trial to remove the stone."

"Ah, my dearest Theseus," replied his mother, "not yet! not yet!"

"Yes, mother," said he, resolutely "the time has come."

Then Theseus bent himself in good earnest to the task, and strained every sinew, with manly strength and resolution. He put his whole brave heart into the effort. He wrestled with the big and sluggish stone, as if it had been a living enemy. He heaved, he lifted, he resolved now to succeed, or else to perish there, and let the rock be his monument forever! Æthra stood gazing at him, and clasped her hands, partly with a

mother's pride, and partly with a mother's sorrow. The great rock stirred! Yes, it was raised slowly from the bedded moss and earth, uprooting the shrubs and flowers along with it, and was turned upon its side. Theseus had conquered!

While taking breath, he looked joyfully at his mother, and she smiled upon him through her tears.

"Yes, Theseus," she said, "the time has come, and you must stay no longer at my side! See what King Ægeus, your royal father, left for you, beneath the stone, when he lifted it in his mighty arms, and laid it on the spot whence you have now removed it."

Theseus looked, and saw that the rock had been placed over another slab of stone, containing a cavity within it; so that it somewhat resembled a roughly made chest or coffer, of which the upper mass had served as the lid. Within the cavity lay a sword, with a golden hilt, and a pair of sandals.

"This was your father's sword," said Æthra, "and those were his sandals. When he went to be king of Athens, he bade me treat you as a child until you should prove yourself a man by lifting this heavy stone. That task being accomplished, you are to put on his sandals, in order to follow in your father's footsteps, and to gird on his sword, so that you may fight giants and dragons, as King Ægeus did in his youth."

"I will set out for Athens this very day!" cried Theseus.

But his mother persuaded him to stay a day or two longer, while she got ready some necessary articles for his journey. When his grandfather, the wise King

Pittheus, heard that Theseus intended to present himself at his father's palace, he earnestly advised him to get on board of a vessel and go by sea; because he might thus arrive within fifteen miles of Athens, without either fatigue or danger.

"The roads are very bad by land," quoth the venerable king; "and they are terribly infested with robbers and monsters. A mere lad, like Theseus, is not fit to be trusted on such a perilous journey, all by himself. No, no; let him go by sea!"

But when Theseus heard of robbers and monsters, he pricked up his ears, and was so much the more eager to take the road along which they were to be met with. On the third day, therefore, he bade a respectful farewell to his grandfather, thanking him for all his kindness, and, after affectionately embracing his mother he set forth, with a good many of her tears glistening on his cheeks, and some, if the truth must be told, that had gushed out of his own eyes. But he let the sun and wind dry them, and walked stoutly on, playing with the golden hilt of his sword and taking very manly strides in his father's sandals.

I cannot stop to tell you hardly any of the adventures that befell Theseus on the road to Athens. It is enough to say, that he quite cleared that part of the country of the robbers, about whom King Pittheus had been so much alarmed. One of these bad people was named Procrustes; and he was indeed a terrible fellow, and had an ugly way of making fun of the poor travelers who happened to fall into his clutches. In his cavern he had a bed, on which, with great pretence of

hospitality, he invited his guests to lie down; but if they happened to be shorter than the bed, this wicked villain stretched them out by main force; or, if they were too long, he lopped off their heads or feet, and laughed at what he had done, as an excellent joke. Thus, however weary a man might be, he never liked to lie in the bed of Procrustes. Another of these robbers, named Scinis, must likewise have been a very great scoundrel. He was in the habit of flinging his victims off a high cliff into the sea; and, in order to give him exactly his deserts, Theseus tossed him off the very same place. But if you will believe me, the sea would not pollute itself by receiving such a bad person into its bosom, neither would the earth, having once got rid of him, consent to take him back; so that, between the cliff and the sea, Scinis stuck fast in the air, which was forced to bear the burden of his naughtiness.

After these memorable deeds, Theseus heard of an enormous sow, which ran wild, and was the terror of all the farmers round about; and, as he did not consider himself above doing any good thing that came in his way, he killed this monstrous creature, and gave the carcass to the poor people for bacon. The great sow had been an awful beast, while ramping about the woods and fields, but was a pleasant object enough when cut up into joints, and smoking on I know not how many dinner tables.

Thus, by the time he reached his journey's end, Theseus had done many valiant feats with his father's golden-hilted sword, and had gained the renown of being one of the bravest young men of the day. His fame

traveled faster than he did, and reached Athens before him. As he entered the city, he heard the inhabitants talking at the street-corners, and saying that Hercules was brave, and Jason too, and Castor and Pollux likewise, but that Theseus, the son of their own king, would turn out as great a hero as the best of them. Theseus took longer strides on hearing this, and fancied himself sure of a magnificent reception at his father's court, since he came thither with Fame to blow her trumpet before him, and cry to King Ægeus, "Behold your son!"

He little suspected, innocent youth that he was, that here, in this very Athens, where his father reigned, a greater danger awaited him than any which he had encountered on the road. Yet this was the truth. You must understand that the father of Theseus, though not very old in years, was almost worn out with the cares of government, and had thus grown aged before his time. His nephews, not expecting him to live a very great while, intended to get all the power of the kingdom into their own hands. But when they heard that Theseus had arrived in Athens, and learned what a gallant young man he was, they saw that he would not be at all the kind of person to let them steal away his father's crown and sceptre, which ought to be his own by right of inheritance. Thus these bad-hearted nephews of King Ægeus, who were the own cousins of Theseus, at once became his enemies. A still more dangerous enemy was Medea, the wicked enchantress; for she was now the king's wife, and wanted to give the kingdom to her son Medus, instead of letting it be given to the son of Æthra, whom she hated.

It so happened that the king's nephews met Theseus, and found out who he was, just as he reached the entrance of the royal palace. With all their evil designs against him, they pretended to be their cousin's best friends, and expressed great joy at making his acquaintance. They proposed to him that he should come into the king's presence as a stranger, in order to try whether Ægeus would discover in the young man's features any likeness either to himself or his mother Æthra, and thus recognize him for a son. Theseus consented; for he fancied that his father would know him in a moment, by the love that was in his heart. But, while he waited at the door, the nephews ran and told King Ægeus that a young man had arrived in Athens, who, to their certain knowledge, intended to put him to death, and get possession of his royal crown.

"And he is now waiting for admission to your Majesty's presence," added they.

"Aha!" cried the old king, on hearing this. "Why, he must be a very wicked young fellow indeed! Pray, what would you advise me to do with him?"

In reply to this question, the wicked Medea put in her word. As I have already told you, she was a famous enchantress. According to some stories, she was in the habit of boiling old people in a large caldron, under pretence of making them young again; but King Ægeus, I suppose, did not fancy such an uncomfortable way of growing young, or perhaps was contented to be old, and therefore would never let himself be popped into the caldron. If there were time to spare from more important matters, I should be glad to tell

you of Medea's fiery chariot, drawn by winged dragons, in which the enchantress used often to take an airing among the clouds. This chariot, in fact, was the vehicle that first brought her to Athens, where she had done nothing but mischief ever since her arrival. But these and many other wonders must be left untold; and it is enough to say, that Medea, amongst a thousand other bad things, knew how to prepare a poison that was instantly fatal to whomsoever might so much as touch it with his lips.

So, when the king asked what he should do with Theseus, this naughty woman had an answer ready at her tongue's end.

"Leave that to me, please your Majesty," she replied. "Only admit this evil-minded young man to your presence, treat him civilly, and invite him to drink a goblet of wine. Your Majesty is well aware that I sometimes amuse myself with distilling very powerful medicines. Here is one of them in this small phial. As to what it is made of, that is one of my secrets of state. Do but let me put a single drop into the goblet, and let the young man taste it; and I will answer for it, he shall quite lay aside the bad designs with which he comes hither."

As she said this, Medea smiled; but, for all her smiling face, she meant nothing less than to poison the poor innocent Theseus, before his father's eyes. And King Ægeus, like most other kings, thought any punishment mild enough for a person who was accused of plotting against his life. He therefore made little or no objection to Medea's scheme, and as soon as the poisonous wine

was ready, gave orders that the young stranger should be admitted into his presence. The goblet was set on a table beside the king's throne; and a fly, meaning just to sip a little from the brim, immediately tumbled into it, dead. Observing this, Medea looked round at the nephews, and smiled again.

When Theseus was ushered into the royal apartment, the only object that he seemed to behold was the white-bearded old king. There he sat on his magnificent throne, a dazzling crown on his head, and a sceptre in his hand. His aspect was stately and majestic, although his years and infirmities weighed heavily upon him, as if each year were a lump of lead, and each infirmity a ponderous stone, and all were bundled up together, and laid upon his weary shoulders. The tears both of joy and sorrow sprang into the young man's eyes; for he thought how sad it was to see his dear father so infirm, and how sweet it would be to support him with his own youthful strength, and to cheer him up with the alacrity of his loving spirit. When a son takes his father into his warm heart, it renews the old man's youth in a better way than by the heat of Medea's magic caldron. And this was what Theseus resolved to do. He could scarcely wait to see whether King Ægeus would recognize him, so eager was he to throw himself into his arms.

Advancing to the foot of the throne, he attempted to make a little speech, which he had been thinking about as he came up the stairs. But he was almost choked by a great many tender feelings that gushed out of his heart and swelled into his throat, all strug-

gling to find utterance together. And therefore, unless he could have laid his full, over-brimming heart into the king's hand, poor Theseus knew not what to do or say. The cunning Medea observed what was passing in the young man's mind. She was more wicked at that moment than ever she had been before; for (and it makes me tremble to tell you of it) she did her worst to turn all this unspeakable love with which Theseus was agitated, to his own ruin and destruction.

"Does your Majesty see the confusion?" she whispered in the king's ear. "He is so conscious of guilt that he trembles and cannot speak. The wretch lives too long! Quick! offer him the wine!"

Now King Ægeus had been gazing earnestly at the young stranger, as he drew near the throne. There was something, he knew not what, either in his white brow, or in the fine expression of his mouth, or in his beautiful and tender eyes, that made him indistinctly feel as if he had seen this youth before, as if, indeed, he had trotted him on his knee when a baby, and had beheld him growing to be a stalwart man, while he himself grew old. But Medea guessed how the king felt, and would not suffer him to yield to these natural sensibilities: although they were the voice of his deepest heart, telling him, as plainly as it could speak, that here was his dear son, and Athens's son, coming to claim him for a father. The enchantress again whispered in the king's ear, and compelled him, by her witchcraft, to see everything under a false aspect.

He made up his mind, therefore, to let Theseus drink off the poisoned wine.

"Young man," said he, "you are welcome! I am proud to show hospitality to so heroic a youth. Do me the favor to drink the contents of this goblet. It is brimming over, as you see, with delicious wine, such as I bestow only on those who are worthy of it! None is more worthy to quaff it than yourself!"

So saying, King Ægeus took the golden goblet from the table, and was about to offer it to Theseus. But, partly through his infirmities, and partly because it seemed so sad a thing to take away this young man's life, however wicked he might be, and partly, no doubt, because his heart was wiser than his head, and quaked within him at the thought of what he was going to do, — for all these reasons, the king's hand trembled so much that a great deal of the wine slopped over. In order to strengthen his purpose, and fearing lest the whole of the precious poison should be wasted, one of his nephews now whispered to him, —

"Has your Majesty any doubt of this stranger's guilt? There is the very sword with which he meant to slay you. How sharp, and bright, and terrible it is! Quick! — let him taste the wine; or perhaps he may do the deed even yet."

At these words, Ægeus drove every thought and feeling out of his breast, except the one idea of how justly the young man deserved to be put to death. He sat erect on his throne, and held out the goblet of wine with a steady hand, and bent on Theseus a frown of kingly severity; for, after all, he had too noble a spirit to murder even a treacherous enemy with a deceitful smile upon his face.

"Drink!" said he, in the stern tone with which he was wont to condemn a criminal to be beheaded. "You have well deserved of me such wine as this!"

Theseus held out his hand to take the wine. But, before he touched it, King Ægeus trembled again. His eyes had fallen on the gold-hilted sword that hung at the young man's side. He drew back the goblet.

"That sword!" he cried; "how came you by it?"

"It was my father's sword," replied Theseus, with a tremulous voice. "These were his sandals. My dear mother (her name is Æthra) told me his story while I was yet a little child. But it is only a month since I grew strong enough to lift the heavy stone, and take the sword and sandals from beneath it, and come to Athens to seek my father."

"My son! my son!" cried King Ægeus, flinging away the fatal goblet, and tottering down from the throne to fall into the arms of Theseus. "Yes, these are Æthra's eyes. It is my son."

I have quite forgotten what became of the king's nephews. But when the wicked Medea saw this new turn of affairs, she hurried out of the room, and going to her private chamber, lost no time in setting her enchantments at work. In a few moments, she heard a great noise of hissing snakes outside of the chamber window; and, behold! there was her fiery chariot, and four huge winged serpents, wriggling and twisting in the air, flourishing their tails higher than the top of the palace, and all ready to set off on an aerial journey. Medea stayed only long enough to take her son with her, and to steal the crown jewels, together with the

king's best robes, and whatever other valuable things she could lay hands on; and getting into the chariot, she whipped up the snakes, and ascended high over the city.

The king, hearing the hiss of the serpents, scrambled as fast as he could to the window, and bawled out to the abominable enchantress never to come back. The whole people of Athens, too, who had run out of doors to see this wonderful spectacle, set up a shout of joy at the prospect of getting rid of her. Medea, almost bursting with rage, uttered precisely such a hiss as one of her own snakes, only ten times more venomous and spiteful; and glaring fiercely out of the blaze of the chariot, she shook her hands over the multitude below, as if she were scattering a million of curses among them. In so doing, however, she unintentionally let fall about five hundred diamonds of the first water, together with a thousand great pearls, and two thousand emeralds, rubies, sapphires, opals, and topazes, to which she had helped herself out of the king's strong-box. All these came pelting down, like a shower of many-colored hailstones, upon the heads of grown people and children, who forthwith gathered them up and carried them back to the palace. But King Ægeus told them that they were welcome to the whole, and to twice as many more, if he had them, for the sake of his delight at finding his son, and losing the wicked Medea. And, indeed, if you had seen how hateful was her last look, as the flaming chariot flew upward, you would not have wondered that both king and people should think her departure a good riddance.

And now Prince Theseus was taken into great favor by his royal father. The old king was never weary of having him sit beside him on his throne (which was quite wide enough for two), and of hearing him tell about his dear mother, and his childhood, and his many boyish efforts to lift the ponderous stone. Theseus, however, was much too brave and active a young man to be willing to spend all his time in relating things which had already happened. His ambition was to perform other and more heroic deeds, which should be better worth telling in prose and verse. Nor had he been long in Athens before he caught and chained a terrible mad bull, and made a public show of him, greatly to the wonder and admiration of good King Ægeus and his subjects. But pretty soon, he undertook an affair that made all his foregone adventures seem like mere boy's play. The occasion of it was as follows: —

One morning, when Prince Theseus awoke, he fancied that he must have had a very sorrowful dream, and that it was still running in his mind, even now that his eyes were open. For it appeared as if the air was full of a melancholy wail; and when he listened more attentively, he could hear sobs and groans, and screams of woe, mingled with deep, quiet sighs, which came from the king's palace, and from the streets, and from the temples, and from every habitation in the city. And all these mournful noises, issuing out of thousands of separate hearts, united themselves into the one great sound of affliction, which had startled Theseus from slumber. He put on his clothes as quickly as he could

(not forgetting his sandals and gold-hilted sword), and hastening to the king, inquired what it all meant.

"Alas! my son," quoth King Ægeus, heaving a long sigh, "here is a very lamentable matter in hand! This is the wofullest anniversary in the whole year. It is the day when we annually draw lots to see which of the youths and maidens of Athens shall go to be devoured by the horrible Minotaur!"

"The Minotaur!" exclaimed Prince Theseus; and, like a brave young prince as he was, he put his hand to the hilt of his sword. "What kind of a monster may that be? Is it not possible, at the risk of one's life, to slay him?"

But King Ægeus shook his venerable head, and to convince Theseus that it was quite a hopeless case, he gave him an explanation of the whole affair. It seems that in the island of Crete there lived a certain dreadful monster, called a Minotaur, which was shaped partly like a man and partly like a bull, and was altogether such a hideous sort of a creature that it is really disagreeable to think of him. If he were suffered to exist at all, it should have been on some desert island, or in the duskiness of some deep cavern, where nobody would ever be tormented by his abominable aspect. But King Minos, who reigned over Crete, laid out a vast deal of money in building a habitation for the Minotaur, and took great care of his health and comfort, merely for mischief's sake. A few years before this time, there had been a war between the city of Athens and the island of Crete, in which the Athenians were beaten, and compelled to beg for peace. No

peace could they obtain, however, except on condition that they should send seven young men and seven maidens, every year, to be devoured by the pet monster of the cruel King Minos. For three years past, this grievous calamity had been borne. And the sobs, and groans, and shrieks with which the city was now filled, were caused by the people's woe, because the fatal day had come again, when the fourteen victims were to be chosen by lot; and the old people feared lest their sons or daughters might be taken, and the youths and damsels dreaded lest they themselves might be destined to glut the ravenous maw of that detestable man-brute.

But when Theseus heard the story, he straightened himself up, so that he seemed taller than ever before; and as for his face, it was indignant, despiteful, bold, tender, and compassionate, all in one look.

"Let the people of Athens, this year, draw lots for only six young men, instead of seven," said he. "I will myself be the seventh; and let the Minotaur devour me, if he can!"

"Oh, my dear son," cried King Ægeus, "why should you expose yourself to this horrible fate? You are a royal prince, and have a right to hold yourself above the destinies of common men."

"It is because I am a prince, your son, and the rightful heir of your kingdom, that I freely take upon me the calamity of your subjects," answered Theseus. "And you, my father, being king over this people, and answerable to Heaven for their welfare, are bound to sacrifice what is dearest to you, rather than that the

son or daughter of the poorest citizen should come to any harm."

The old king shed tears, and besought Theseus not to leave him desolate in his old age, more especially as he had but just begun to know the happiness of possessing a good and valiant son. Theseus, however, felt that he was in the right, and therefore would not give up his resolution. But he assured his father that he did not intend to be eaten up, unresistingly, like a sheep, and that, if the Minotaur devoured him, it should not be without a battle for his dinner. And finally, since he could not help it, King Ægeus consented to let him go. So a vessel was got ready, and rigged with black sails; and Theseus, with six other young men, and seven tender and beautiful damsels, came down to the harbor to embark. A sorrowful multitude accompanied them to the shore. There was the poor old king, too, leaning on his son's arm, and looking as if his single heart held all the grief of Athens.

Just as Prince Theseus was going on board, his father bethought himself of one last word to say.

"My beloved son," said he, grasping the prince's hand, "you observe that the sails of this vessel are black; as indeed they ought to be, since it goes upon a voyage of sorrow and despair. Now, being weighed down with infirmities, I know not whether I can survive till the vessel shall return. But, as long as I do live, I shall creep daily to the top of yonder cliff, to watch if there be a sail upon the sea. And, dearest Theseus, if by some happy chance you should escape the jaws of the Minotaur, then tear down those dismal sails, and

hoist others that shall be bright as the sunshine. Beholding them on the horizon, myself and all the people will know that you are coming back victorious, and will welcome you with such a festal uproar as Athens never heard before."

Theseus promised that he would do so. Then, going on board, the mariners trimmed the vessel's black sails to the wind, which blew faintly off the shore, being pretty much made up of the sighs that everybody kept pouring forth on this melancholy occasion. But by and by, when they had got fairly out to sea, there came a stiff breeze from the northwest, and drove them along as merrily over the white-capped waves as if they had been going on the most delightful errand imaginable. And though it was a sad business enough, I rather question whether fourteen young people, without any old persons to keep them in order, could continue to spend the whole time of the voyage in being miserable. There had been some few dances upon the undulating deck, I suspect, and some hearty bursts of laughter, and other such unseasonable merriment among the victims, before the high, blue mountains of Crete began to show themselves among the far-off clouds. That sight, to be sure, made them all very grave again.

Theseus stood among the sailors, gazing eagerly towards the land; although, as yet, it seemed hardly more substantial than the clouds, amidst which the mountains were looming up. Once or twice, he fancied that he saw a glare of some bright object, a long way off, flinging a gleam across the waves.

"Did you see that flash of light?" he inquired of the master of the vessel.

"No, prince; but I have seen it before," answered the master. "It came from Talus, I suppose."

As the breeze came fresher just then, the master was busy with trimming his sails, and had no more time to answer questions. But while the vessel flew faster and faster towards Crete, Theseus was astonished to behold a human figure, gigantic in size, which appeared to be striding with a measured movement, along the margin of the island. It stepped from cliff to cliff, and sometimes from one headland to another, while the sea foamed and thundered on the shore beneath, and dashed its jets of spray over the giant's feet. What was still more remarkable, whenever the sun shone on this huge figure, it flickered and glimmered; its vast countenance, too, had a metallic lustre, and threw great flashes of splendor through the air. The folds of its garments, moreover, instead of waving in the wind, fell heavily over its limbs, as if woven of some kind of metal.

The nigher the vessel came, the more Theseus wondered what this immense giant could be, and whether it actually had life or no. For though it walked, and made other lifelike motions, there yet was a kind of jerk in its gait, which, together with its brazen aspect, caused the young prince to suspect that it was no true giant, but only a wonderful piece of machinery. The figure looked all the more terrible because it carried an enormous brass club on its shoulder.

"What is this wonder?" Theseus asked of the

master of the vessel, who was now at leisure to answer him.

"It is Talus, the Man of Brass," said the master.

"And is he a live giant, or a brazen image?" asked Theseus.

"That, truly," replied the master, "is the point which has always perplexed me. Some say, indeed, that this Talus was hammered out for King Minos by Vulcan himself, the skillfulest of all workers in metal. But who ever saw a brazen image that had sense enough to walk round an island three times a day, as this giant walks round the island of Crete, challenging every vessel that comes nigh the shore? And, on the other hand, what living thing, unless his sinews were made of brass, would not be weary of marching eighteen hundred miles in the twenty-four hours, as Talus does, without ever sitting down to rest? He is a puzzler, take him how you will."

Still the vessel went bounding onward; and now Theseus could hear the brazen clangor of the giant's footsteps, as he trod heavily upon the sea-beaten rocks, some of which were seen to crack and crumble into the foamy waves beneath his weight. As they approached the entrance of the port, the giant straddled clear across it, with a foot firmly planted on each headland, and uplifting his club to such a height that its but-end was hidden in a cloud, he stood in that formidable posture, with the sun gleaming all over his metallic surface. There seemed nothing else to be expected but that, the next moment, he would fetch his great club down, slam bang, and smash the vessel into a thousand pieces,

without heeding how many innocent people he might destroy; for there is seldom any mercy in a giant, you know, and quite as little in a piece of brass clock-work. But just when Theseus and his companions thought the blow was coming, the brazen lips unclosed themselves, and the figure spoke.

"Whence come you, strangers?"

And when the ringing voice ceased, there was just such a reverberation as you may have heard within a great church bell, for a moment or two after the stroke of the hammer.

"From Athens!" shouted the master in reply.

"On what errand?" thundered the Man of Brass.

And he whirled his club aloft more threateningly than ever, as if he were about to smite them with a thunder-stroke right amidships, because Athens, so little while ago, had been at war with Crete.

"We bring the seven youths and the seven maidens," answered the master, "to be devoured by the Minotaur!"

"Pass!" cried the brazen giant.

That one loud word rolled all about the sky, while again there was a booming reverberation within the figure's breast. The vessel glided between the headlands of the port, and the giant resumed his march. In a few moments, this wondrous sentinel was far away, flashing in the distant sunshine, and revolving with immense strides around the island of Crete, as it was his never-ceasing task to do.

No sooner had they entered the harbor than a party of the guards of King Minos came down to the water-

side, and took charge of the fourteen young men and damsels. Surrounded by these armed warriors, Prince Theseus and his companions were led to the king's palace, and ushered into his presence. Now, Minos was a stern and pitiless king. If the figure that guarded Crete was made of brass, then the monarch who ruled over it might be thought to have a still harder metal in his breast, and might have been called a man of iron. He bent his shaggy brows upon the poor Athenian victims. Any other mortal, beholding their fresh and tender beauty, and their innocent looks, would have felt himself sitting on thorns until he had made every soul of them happy, by bidding them go free as the summer wind. But this immitigable Minos cared only to examine whether they were plump enough to satisfy the Minotaur's appetite. For my part, I wish he himself had been the only victim; and the monster would have found him a pretty tough one.

One after another, King Minos called these pale, frightened youths and sobbing maidens to his footstool, gave them each a poke in the ribs with his sceptre (to try whether they were in good flesh or no), and dismissed them with a nod to his guards. But when his eyes rested on Theseus, the king looked at him more attentively, because his face was calm and brave.

"Young man," asked he, with his stern voice, "are you not appalled at the certainty of being devoured by this terrible Minotaur?"

"I have offered my life in a good cause," answered Theseus, "and therefore I give it freely and gladly. But thou, King Minos, art thou not thyself appalled,

who, year after year, hast perpetrated this dreadful wrong, by giving seven innocent youths and as many maidens to be devoured by a monster? Dost thou not tremble, wicked king, to turn thine eyes inward on thine own heart? Sitting there on thy golden throne, and in thy robes of majesty, I tell thee to thy face, King Minos, thou art a more hideous monster than the Minotaur himself!"

"Aha! do you think me so?" cried the king, laughing in his cruel way. "To-morrow, at breakfast-time, you shall have an opportunity of judging which is the greater monster, the Minotaur or the king! Take them away, guards; and let this free-spoken youth be the Minotaur's first morsel!"

Near the king's throne (though I had no time to tell you so before) stood his daughter Ariadne. She was a beautiful and tender-hearted maiden, and looked at these poor doomed captives with very different feelings from those of the iron-breasted King Minos. She really wept, indeed, at the idea of how much human happiness would be needlessly thrown away, by giving so many young people, in the first bloom and rose blossom of their lives, to be eaten up by a creature who, no doubt, would have preferred a fat ox, or even a large pig, to the plumpest of them. And when she beheld the brave, spirited figure of Prince Theseus bearing himself so calmly in his terrible peril, she grew a hundred times more pitiful than before. As the guards were taking him away, she flung herself at the king's feet, and besought him to set all the captives free, and especially this one young man.

"Peace, foolish girl!" answered King Minos. "What hast thou to do with an affair like this? It is a matter of state policy, and therefore quite beyond thy weak comprehension. Go water thy flowers, and think no more of these Athenian caitiffs, whom the Minotaur shall as certainly eat up for breakfast as I will eat a partridge for my supper."

So saying, the king looked cruel enough to devour Theseus and all the rest of the captives, himself, had there been no Minotaur to save him the trouble. As he would hear not another word in their favor, the prisoners were now led away, and clapped into a dungeon, where the jailer advised them to go to sleep as soon as possible, because the Minotaur was in the habit of calling for breakfast early. The seven maidens and six of the young men soon sobbed themselves to slumber! But Theseus was not like them. He felt conscious that he was wiser and braver and stronger than his companions, and that therefore he had the responsibility of all their lives upon him, and must consider whether there was no way to save them, even in this last extremity. So he kept himself awake, and paced to and fro across the gloomy dungeon in which they were shut up.

Just before midnight, the door was softly unbarred, and the gentle Ariadne showed herself, with a torch in her hand.

"Are you awake, Prince Theseus?" she whispered.

"Yes," answered Theseus. "With so little time to live, I do not choose to waste any of it in sleep."

"Then follow me," said Ariadne, "and tread softly."

What had become of the jailer and the guards, Theseus never knew. But however that might be, Ariadne opened all the doors, and led him forth from the darksome prison into the pleasant moonlight.

"Theseus," said the maiden, "you can now get on board your vessel, and sail away for Athens."

"No," answered the young man; "I will never leave Crete unless I can first slay the Minotaur, and save my poor companions, and deliver Athens from this cruel tribute."

"I knew that this would be your resolution," said Ariadne. "Come, then, with me, brave Theseus. Here is your own sword, which the guards deprived you of. You will need it; and pray Heaven you may use it well."

Then she led Theseus along by the hand until they came to a dark, shadowy grove, where the moonlight wasted itself on the tops of the trees, without shedding hardly so much as a glimmering beam upon their pathway. After going a good way through this obscurity, they reached a high marble wall, which was overgrown with creeping plants, that made it shaggy with their verdure. The wall seemed to have no door, nor any windows, but rose up, lofty, and massive, and mysterious, and was neither to be clambered over, nor, so far as Theseus could perceive, to be passed through. Nevertheless, Ariadne did but press one of her soft little fingers against a particular block of marble, and, though it looked as solid as any other part of the wall, it yielded to her touch, disclosing an entrance just wide enough to admit them. They crept through, and the marble stone swung back into its place.

"We are now," said Ariadne, "in the famous labyrinth which Dædalus built before he made himself a pair of wings, and flew away from our island like a bird. That Dædalus was a very cunning workman; but of all his artful contrivances, this labyrinth is the most wondrous. Were we to take but a few steps from the doorway, we might wander about all our lifetime, and never find it again. Yet in the very centre of this labyrinth is the Minotaur; and, Theseus, you must go thither to seek him."

"But how shall I ever find him," asked Theseus, "if the labyrinth so bewilders me as you say it will?"

Just as he spoke they heard a rough and very disagreeable roar, which greatly resembled the lowing of a fierce bull, but yet had some sort of sound like the human voice. Theseus even fancied a rude articulation in it, as if the creature that uttered it were trying to shape his hoarse breath into words. It was at some distance, however, and he really could not tell whether it sounded most like a bull's roar or a man's harsh voice.

"That is the Minotaur's noise," whispered Ariadne, closely grasping the hand of Theseus, and pressing one of her own hands to her heart, which was all in a tremble. "You must follow that sound through the windings of the labyrinth, and, by and by, you will find him. Stay! take the end of this silken string; I will hold the other end; and then, if you win the victory, it will lead you again to this spot. Farewell, brave Theseus."

So the young man took the end of the silken string in his left hand, and his gold-hilted sword, ready drawn from its scabbard, in the other, and trod boldly into the

inscrutable labyrinth. How this labyrinth was built is more than I can tell you. But so cunningly contrived a mizmaze was never seen in the world, before nor since. There can be nothing else so intricate, unless it were the brain of a man like Dædalus, who planned it, or the heart of any ordinary man; which last, to be sure, is ten times as great a mystery as the labyrinth of Crete. Theseus had not taken five steps before he lost sight of Ariadne; and in five more his head was growing dizzy. But still he went on, now creeping through a low arch, now ascending a flight of steps, now in one crooked passage and now in another, with here a door opening before him, and there one banging behind, until it really seemed as if the walls spun round, and whirled him round along with them. And all the while, through these hollow avenues, now nearer, now farther off again, resounded the cry of the Minotaur; and the sound was so fierce, so cruel, so ugly, so like a bull's roar, and withal so like a human voice, and yet like neither of them, that the brave heart of Theseus grew sterner and angrier at every step; for he felt it an insult to the moon and sky, and to our affectionate and simple Mother Earth, that such a monster should have the audacity to exist.

As he passed onward, the clouds gathered over the moon, and the labyrinth grew so dusky that Theseus could no longer discern the bewilderment through which he was passing. He would have felt quite lost, and utterly hopeless of ever again walking in a straight path, if, every little while, he had not been conscious of a gentle twitch at the silken cord. Then he knew that the

tender-hearted Ariadne was still holding the other end, and that she was fearing for him, and hoping for him, and giving him just as much of her sympathy as if she were close by his side. Oh, indeed, I can assure you, there was a vast deal of human sympathy running along that slender thread of silk. But still he followed the dreadful roar of the Minotaur, which now grew louder and louder, and finally so very loud that Theseus fully expected to come close upon him, at every new zigzag and wriggle of the path. And at last, in an open space, at the very centre of the labyrinth, he did discern the hideous creature.

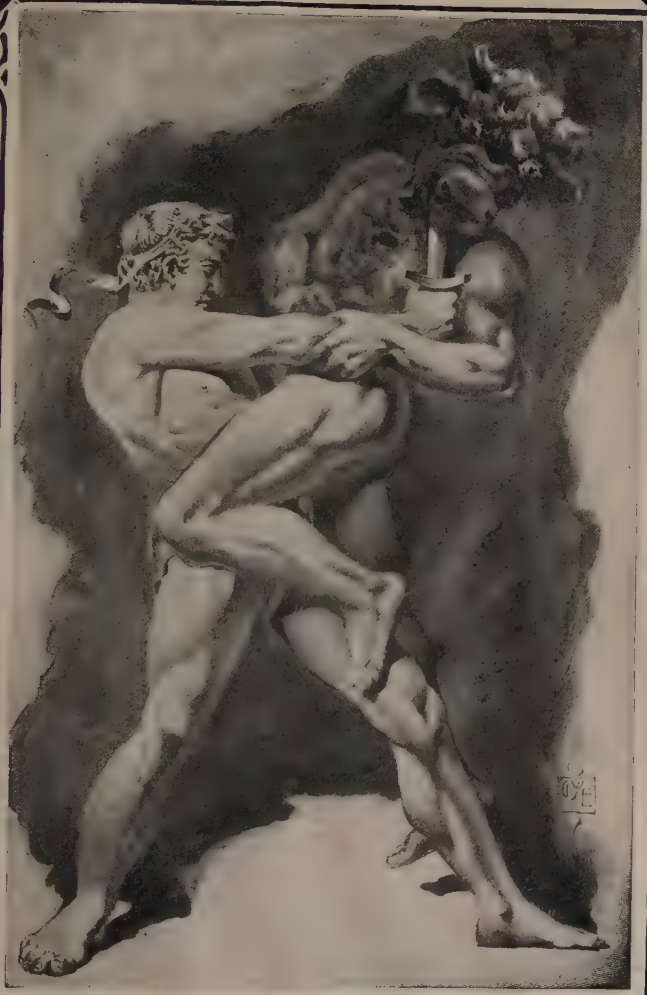
Sure enough, what an ugly monster it was! Only his horned head belonged to a bull; and yet, somehow or other, he looked like a bull all over, preposterously waddling on his hind legs; or, if you happened to view him in another way, he seemed wholly a man, and all the more monstrous for being so. And there he was, the wretched thing, with no society, no companion, no kind of a mate, living only to do mischief, and incapable of knowing what affection means. Theseus hated him, and shuddered at him, and yet could not but be sensible of some sort of pity; and all the more, the uglier and more detestable the creature was. For he kept striding to and fro in a solitary frenzy of rage, continually emitting a hoarse roar, which was oddly mixed up with half-shaped words; and, after listening awhile, Theseus understood that the Minotaur was saying to himself how miserable he was, and how hungry, and how he hated everybody, and how he longed to eat up the human race alive.

Ah, the bull-headed villain! And oh, my good little people, you will perhaps see, one of these days, as I do now, that every human being who suffers anything evil to get into his nature, or to remain there, is a kind of Minotaur, an enemy of his fellow-creatures, and separated from all good companionship, as this poor monster was.

Was Theseus afraid? By no means, my dear auditors. What! a hero like Theseus afraid! Not had the Minotaur had twenty bull heads instead of one. Bold as he was, however, I rather fancy that it strengthened his valiant heart, just at this crisis, to feel a tremulous twitch at the silken cord, which he was still holding in his left hand. It was as if Ariadne were giving him all her might and courage; and, much as he already had, and little as she had to give, it made his own seem twice as much. And to confess the honest truth, he needed the whole; for now the Minotaur, turning suddenly about, caught sight of Theseus, and instantly lowered his horribly sharp horns, exactly as a mad bull does when he means to rush against an enemy. At the same time, he belched forth a tremendous roar, in which there was something like the words of human language, but all disjointed and shaken to pieces by passing through the gullet of a miserably enraged brute.

Theseus could only guess what the creature intended to say, and that rather by his gestures than his words; for the Minotaur's horns were sharper than his wits, and of a great deal more service to him than his tongue. But probably this was the sense of what he uttered: —

"Ah, wretch of a human being! I'll stick my horns



THE AWFUL FIGHT BETWEEN THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR

through you, and toss you fifty feet high, and eat you up the moment you come down."

"Come on, then, and try it!" was all that Theseus deigned to reply; for he was far too magnanimous to assault his enemy with insolent language.

Without more words on either side, there ensued the most awful fight between Theseus and the Minotaur that ever happened beneath the sun or moon. I really know not how it might have turned out, if the monster, in his first headlong rush against Theseus, had not missed him, by a hair's-breadth, and broken one of his horns short off against the stone wall. On this mishap, he bellowed so intolerably that a part of the labyrinth tumbled down, and all the inhabitants of Crete mistook the noise for an uncommonly heavy thunder-storm. Smarting with the pain, he galloped around the open space in so ridiculous a way that Theseus laughed at it, long afterwards, though not precisely at the moment. After this, the two antagonists stood valiantly up to one another, and fought sword to horn, for a long while. At last, the Minotaur made a run at Theseus, grazed his left side with his horn, and flung him down; and thinking that he had stabbed him to the heart, he cut a great caper in the air, opened his bull mouth from ear to ear, and prepared to snap his head off. But Theseus by this time had leaped up, and caught the monster off his guard. Fetching a sword-stroke at him with all his force, he hit him fair upon the neck, and made his bull head skip six yards from his human body, which fell down flat upon the ground.

So now the battle was ended. Immediately the moon

shone out as brightly as if all the troubles of the world, and all the wickedness and the ugliness that infest human life, were past and gone forever. And Theseus, as he leaned on his sword, taking breath, felt another twitch of the silken cord; for all through the terrible encounter he had held it fast in his left hand. Eager to let Ariadne know of his success, he followed the guidance of the thread, and soon found himself at the entrance of the labyrinth.

"Thou hast slain the monster," cried Ariadne, clasping her hands.

"Thanks to thee, dear Ariadne," answered Theseus, "I return victorious."

"Then," said Ariadne, "we must quickly summon thy friends, and get them and thyself on board the vessel before dawn. If morning finds thee here, my father will avenge the Minotaur."

To make my story short, the poor captives were awakened, and, hardly knowing whether it was not a joyful dream, were told of what Theseus had done, and that they must set sail for Athens before daybreak. Hastening down to the vessel, they all clambered on board, except Prince Theseus, who lingered behind them, on the strand, holding Ariadne's hand clasped in his own.

"Dear maiden," said he, "thou wilt surely go with us. Thou art too gentle and sweet a child for such an iron-hearted father as King Minos. He cares no more for thee than a granite rock cares for the little flower that grows in one of its crevices. But my father, King Ægeus, and my dear mother, Æthra, and all the

fathers and mothers in Athens, and all the sons and daughters too, will love and honor thee as their benefactress. Come with us, then; for King Minos will be very angry when he knows what thou hast done."

Now, some low-minded people, who pretend to tell the story of Theseus and Ariadne, have the face to say that this royal and honorable maiden did really flee away, under cover of the night, with the young stranger whose life she had preserved. They say, too, that Prince Theseus (who would have died sooner than wrong the meanest creature in the world) ungratefully deserted Ariadne, on a solitary island, where the vessel touched on its voyage to Athens. But, had the noble Theseus heard these falsehoods, he would have served their slanderous authors as he served the Minotaur! Here is what Ariadne answered, when the brave Prince of Athens besought her to accompany him: —

"No, Theseus," the maiden said, pressing his hand, and then drawing back a step or two, "I cannot go with you. My father is old, and has nobody but myself to love him. Hard as you think his heart is, it would break to lose me. At first King Minos will be angry; but he will soon forgive his only child; and by and by he will rejoice, I know, that no more youths and maidens must come from Athens to be devoured by the Minotaur. I have saved you, Theseus, as much for my father's sake as for your own. Farewell! Heaven bless you!"

All this was so true, and so maiden-like, and was spoken with so sweet a dignity, that Theseus would have blushed to urge her any longer. Nothing remained

for him, therefore, but to bid Ariadne an affectionate farewell, and go on board the vessel, and set sail.

In a few moments the white foam was boiling up before their prow, as Prince Theseus and his companions sailed out of the harbor with a whistling breeze behind them. Talus, the brazen giant, on his never-ceasing sentinel's march, happened to be approaching that part of the coast; and they saw him, by the glimmering of the moonbeams on his polished surface, while he was yet a great way off. As the figure moved like clock-work, however, and could neither hasten his enormous strides nor retard them, he arrived at the port when they were just beyond the reach of his club. Nevertheless, straddling from headland to headland, as his custom was, Talus attempted to strike a blow at the vessel, and, overreaching himself, tumbled at full length into the sea, which splashed high over his gigantic shape, as when an iceberg turns a somerset. There he lies yet; and whoever desires to enrich himself by means of brass had better go thither with a diving-bell, and fish up Talus.

On the homeward voyage, the fourteen youths and damsels were in excellent spirits, as you will easily suppose. They spent most of their time in dancing, unless when the sidelong breeze made the deck slope too much. In due season, they came within sight of the coast of Attica, which was their native country. But here, I am grieved to tell you, happened a sad misfortune.

You will remember (what Theseus unfortunately forgot) that his father, King Ægeus, had enjoined it

upon him to hoist sunshine sails, instead of black ones, in case he should overcome the Minotaur, and return victorious. In the joy of their success, however, and amidst the sports, dancing, and other merriment with which these young folks wore away the time, they never once thought whether their sails were black, white, or rainbow colored, and, indeed, left it entirely to the mariners whether they had any sails at all. Thus the vessel returned, like a raven, with the same sable wings that had wafted her away. But poor King Ægeus, day after day, infirm as he was, had clambered to the summit of a cliff that overhung the sea, and there sat watching for Prince Theseus, homeward bound; and no sooner did he behold the fatal blackness of the sails, than he concluded that his dear son, whom he loved so much, and felt so proud of, had been eaten by the Minotaur. He could not bear the thought of living any longer; so, first flinging his crown and sceptre into the sea (useless baubles that they were to him now!), King Ægeus merely stooped forward, and fell headlong over the cliff, and was drowned, poor soul, in the waves that foamed at its base!

This was melancholy news for Prince Theseus, who, when he stepped ashore, found himself king of all the country, whether he would or no; and such a turn of fortune was enough to make any young man feel very much out of spirits. However, he sent for his dear mother to Athens, and, by taking her advice in matters of state, became a very excellent monarch, and was greatly beloved by his people.

THE CHIMÆRA

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

ONCE, in the old, old times (for all the strange things which I tell you about happened long before anybody can remember), a fountain gushed out of a hillside, in the marvelous land of Greece. And, for aught I know, after so many thousand years, it is still gushing out of the very selfsame spot. At any rate, there was the pleasant fountain, welling freshly forth and sparkling adown the hillside, in the golden sunset, when a handsome young man named Bellerophon drew near its margin. In his hand he held a bridle, studded with brilliant gems, and adorned with a golden bit. Seeing an old man, and another of middle age, and a little boy, near the fountain, and likewise a maiden, who was dipping up some of the water in a pitcher, he paused, and begged that he might refresh himself with a draught.

"This is very delicious water," he said to the maiden as he rinsed and filled her pitcher, after drinking out of it. "Will you be kind enough to tell me whether the fountain has any name?"

"Yes; it is called the Fountain of Pirene," answered the maiden; and then she added, "My grandmother has told me that this clear fountain was once a beautiful woman; and when her son was killed by the arrows

of the huntress Diana, she melted all away into tears. And so the water, which you find so cool and sweet, is the sorrow of that poor mother's heart!"

"I should not have dreamed," observed the young stranger, "that so clear a well-spring, with its gush and gurgle, and its cheery dance out of the shade into the sunlight, had so much as one tear-drop in its bosom! And this, then, is Pirene? I thank you, pretty maiden, for telling me its name. I have come from a far-away country to find this very spot."

A middle-aged country fellow (he had driven his cow to drink out of the spring) stared hard at young Bellerophon, and at the handsome bridle which he carried in his hand.

"The water-courses must be getting low, friend, in your part of the world," remarked he, "if you come so far only to find the Fountain of Pirene. But, pray, have you lost a horse? I see you carry the bridle in your hand; and a very pretty one it is, with that double row of bright stones upon it. If the horse was as fine as the bridle, you are much to be pitied for losing him."

"I have lost no horse," said Bellerophon, with a smile. "But I happen to be seeking a very famous one, which, as wise people have informed me, must be found hereabouts, if anywhere. Do you know whether the winged horse Pegasus still haunts the Fountain of Pirene, as he used to do in your forefathers' days?"

But then the country fellow laughed.

Some of you, my little friends, have probably heard that this Pegasus was a snow-white steed, with beautiful silvery wings, who spent most of his time on the

summit of Mount Helicon. He was as wild, and as swift, and as buoyant, in his flight through the air, as any eagle that ever soared into the clouds. There was nothing else like him in the world. He had no mate; he never had been backed or bridled by a master; and, for many a long year, he led a solitary and a happy life.

Oh, how fine a thing it is to be a winged horse! Sleeping at night, as he did, on a lofty mountain-top, and passing the greater part of the day in the air, Pegasus seemed hardly to be a creature of the earth. Whenever he was seen, up very high above people's heads, with the sunshine on his silvery wings, you would have thought that he belonged to the sky, and that, skimming a little too low, he had got astray among our mists and vapors, and was seeking his way back again. It was very pretty to behold him plunge into the fleecy bosom of a bright cloud, and be lost in it, for a moment or two, and then break forth from the other side. Or, in a sullen rain-storm, when there was a gray pavement of clouds over the whole sky, it would sometimes happen that the winged horse descended right through it, and the glad light of the upper region would gleam after him. In another instant, it is true, both Pegasus and the pleasant light would be gone away together. But any one that was fortunate enough to see this wondrous spectacle felt cheerful the whole day afterwards, and as much longer as the storm lasted.

In the summer-time, and in the beautifulest of weather, Pegasus often alighted on the solid earth,

and, closing his silvery wings, would gallop over hill and dale for pastime, as fleetly as the wind. Oftener than in any other place, he had been seen near the Fountain of Pirene, drinking the delicious water, or rolling himself upon the soft grass of the margin. Sometimes, too (but Pegasus was very dainty in his food), he would crop a few of the clover-blossoms that happened to be sweetest.

To the Fountain of Pirene, therefore, people's great-grandfathers had been in the habit of going (as long as they were youthful, and retained their faith in winged horses), in hopes of getting a glimpse at the beautiful Pegasus. But of late years he had been very seldom seen. Indeed, there were many of the country folks, dwelling within half an hour's walk of the fountain, who had never beheld Pegasus, and did not believe that there was any such creature in existence. The country fellow to whom Bellerophon was speaking chanced to be one of those incredulous persons.

And that was the reason why he laughed.

"Pegasus, indeed!" cried he, turning up his nose as high as such a flat nose could be turned up, — "Pegasus, indeed! A winged horse, truly! Why, friend, are you in your senses? Of what use would wings be to a horse? Could he drag the plough so well, think you? To be sure, there might be a little saving in the expense of shoes; but then, how would a man like to see his horse flying out of the stable window? — yes, or whisking him up above the clouds, when he only wanted to ride to mill? No, no! I don't believe in Pegasus. There never was such a ridiculous kind of a horse-fowl made!"

"I have some reason to think otherwise," said Bellerophon, quietly.

And then he turned to an old, gray man, who was leaning on a staff, and listening very attentively, with his head stretched forward, and one hand at his ear, because, for the last twenty years, he had been getting rather deaf.

"And what say you, venerable sir?" inquired he. "In your younger days, I should imagine, you must frequently have seen the winged steed!"

"Ah, young stranger, my memory is very poor!" said the aged man. "When I was a lad, if I remember rightly, I used to believe there was such a horse, and so did everybody else. But nowadays I hardly know what to think, and very seldom think about the winged horse at all. If I ever saw the creature, it was a long, long while ago; and, to tell you the truth, I doubt whether I ever did see him. One day, to be sure, when I was quite a youth, I remember seeing some hoof-tramps round about the brink of the fountain. Pegasus might have made those hoof-marks; and so might some other horse."

"And have you never seen him, my fair maiden?" asked Bellerophon of the girl, who stood with the pitcher on her head, while this talk went on. "You certainly could see Pegasus, if anybody can, for your eyes are very bright."

"Once I thought I saw him," replied the maiden, with a smile and a blush. "It was either Pegasus, or a large white bird, a very great way up in the air. And one other time, as I was coming to the fountain with my

pitcher, I heard a neigh. Oh, such a brisk and melodious neigh as that was! My very heart leaped with delight at the sound. But it startled me, nevertheless; so that I ran home without filling my pitcher."

"That was truly a pity!" said Bellerophon.

And he turned to the child, whom I mentioned at the beginning of the story, and who was gazing at him, as children are apt to gaze at strangers, with his rosy mouth wide open.

"Well, my little fellow," cried Bellerophon, playfully pulling one of his curls, "I suppose you have often seen the winged horse."

"That I have," answered the child, very readily. "I saw him yesterday, and many times before."

"You are a fine little man!" said Bellerophon, drawing the child closer to him. "Come, tell me all about it."

"Why," replied the child, "I often come here to sail little boats in the fountain, and to gather pretty pebbles out of its basin. And sometimes, when I look down into the water, I see the image of the winged horse, in the picture of the sky that is there. I wish he would come down, and take me on his back, and let me ride him up to the moon! But, if I so much as stir to look at him, he flies far away out of sight."

And Bellerophon put his faith in the child, who had seen the image of Pegasus in the water, and in the maiden, who had heard him neigh so melodiously, rather than in the middle-aged clown, who believed only in cart-horses, or in the old man, who had forgotten the beautiful things of his youth.

Therefore, he haunted about the Fountain of Pirene

for a great many days afterwards. He kept continually on the watch, looking upward at the sky, or else down into the water, hoping forever that he should see either the reflected image of the winged horse, or the marvelous reality. He held the bridle, with its bright gems and golden bit, always ready in his hand. The rustic people who dwelt in the neighborhood, and drove their cattle to the fountain to drink, would often laugh at poor Bellerophon, and sometimes take him pretty severely to task. They told him that an able-bodied young man, like himself, ought to have better business than to be wasting his time in such an idle pursuit. They offered to sell him a horse, if he wanted one; and when Bellerophon declined the purchase, they tried to drive a bargain with him for his fine bridle.

Even the country boys thought him so very foolish, that they used to have a great deal of sport about him, and were rude enough not to care a fig, although Bellerophon saw and heard it. One little urchin, for example, would play Pegasus, and cut the oddest imaginable capers, by way of flying; while one of his schoolfellows would scamper after him, holding forth a twist of bulrushes, which was intended to represent Bellerophon's ornamental bridle. But the gentle child who had seen the picture of Pegasus in the water, comforted the young stranger more than all the naughty boys could torment him. The dear little fellow, in his play-hours, often sat down beside him, and, without speaking a word, would look down into the fountain and up towards the sky, with so innocent a faith, that Bellerophon could not help feeling encouraged.

Now you will, perhaps, wish to be told why it was that Bellerophon had undertaken to catch the winged horse. And we shall find no better opportunity to speak about this matter than while he is waiting for Pegasus to appear.

If I were to relate the whole of Bellerophon's previous adventures, they might easily grow into a very long story. It will be quite enough to say, that, in a certain country of Asia, a terrible monster, called a Chimæra, had made its appearance, and was doing more mischief than could be talked about between now and sunset. According to the best accounts which I have been able to obtain, this Chimæra was nearly, if not quite, the ugliest and most poisonous creature, and the strangest and unaccountablest, and the hardest to fight with, and the most difficult to run away from, that ever came out of the earth's inside. It had a tail like a boa-constrictor; its body was like I do not care what; and it had three separate heads, one of which was a lion's, the second a goat's, and the third an abominably great snake's. And a hot blast of fire came flaming out of each of its three mouths! Being an earthly monster, I doubt whether it had any wings; but, wings or no, it ran like a goat and a lion, and wriggled along like a serpent, and thus contrived to make about as much speed as all the three together.

Oh, the mischief, and mischief, and mischief that this naughty creature did! With its flaming breath, it could set a forest on fire, or burn up a field of grain, or, for that matter, a village, with all its fences and houses. It laid waste the whole country round about, and used

to eat up people and animals alive, and cook them afterwards in the burning oven of its stomach. Mercy on us, little children, I hope neither you nor I will ever happen to meet a Chimæra!

While the hateful beast (if a beast we can anywise call it) was doing all these horrible things, it so chanced that Bellerophon came to that part of the world, on a visit to the king. The king's name was Iobates, and Lycia was the country which he ruled over. Bellerophon was one of the bravest youths in the world, and desired nothing so much as to do some valiant and beneficent deed, such as would make all mankind admire and love him. In those days, the only way for a young man to distinguish himself was by fighting battles, either with the enemies of his country, or with wicked giants, or with troublesome dragons, or with wild beasts, when he could find nothing more dangerous to encounter. King Iobates, perceiving the courage of his youthful visitor, proposed to him to go and fight the Chimæra, which everybody else was afraid of, and which, unless it should be soon killed, was likely to convert Lycia into a desert. Bellerophon hesitated not a moment, but assured the king that he would either slay this dreaded Chimæra, or perish in the attempt.

But, in the first place, as the monster was so prodigiously swift, he bethought himself that he should never win the victory by fighting on foot. The wisest thing he could do, therefore, was to get the very best and fleetest horse that could anywhere be found. And what other horse, in all the world, was half so fleet as the marvelous horse Pegasus, who had wings as well as

legs, and was even more active in the air than on the earth? To be sure, a great many people denied that there was any such horse with wings, and said that the stories about him were all poetry and nonsense. But, wonderful as it appeared, Bellerophon believed that Pegasus was a real steed, and hoped that he himself might be fortunate enough to find him; and, once fairly mounted on his back, he would be able to fight the Chimæra at better advantage.

And this was the purpose with which he had traveled from Lycia to Greece, and had brought the beautifully ornamented bridle in his hand. It was an enchanted bridle. If he could only succeed in putting the golden bit into the mouth of Pegasus, the winged horse would be submissive, and would own Bellerophon for his master, and fly whithersoever he might choose to turn the rein.

But, indeed, it was a weary and anxious time, while Bellerophon waited and waited for Pegasus, in hopes that he would come and drink at the Fountain of Pirene. He was afraid lest King Iobates should imagine that he had fled from the Chimæra. It pained him, too, to think how much mischief the monster was doing, while he himself, instead of fighting with it, was compelled to sit idly poring over the bright waters of Pirene, as they gushed out of the sparkling sand. And as Pegasus came thither so seldom in these latter years, and scarcely alighted there more than once in a lifetime, Bellerophon feared that he might grow an old man, and have no strength left in his arms nor courage in his heart, before the winged horse would appear. Oh, how heavily

passes the time, while an adventurous youth is yearning to do his part in life, and to gather in the harvest of his renown! How hard a lesson it is to wait! Our life is brief, and how much of it is spent in teaching us only this!

Well was it for Bellerophon that the gentle child had grown so fond of him, and was never weary of keeping him company. Every morning the child gave him a new hope to put in his bosom, instead of yesterday's withered one.

"Dear Bellerophon," he would cry, looking up hopefully into his face, "I think we shall see Pegasus to-day!"

And, at length, if it had not been for the little boy's unwavering faith, Bellerophon would have given up all hope, and would have gone back to Lycia, and have done his best to slay the Chimæra without the help of the winged horse. And in that case poor Bellerophon would at least have been terribly scorched by the creature's breath, and would most probably have been killed and devoured. Nobody should ever try to fight an earth-born Chimæra, unless he can first get upon the back of an aerial steed.

One morning the child spoke to Bellerophon even more hopefully than usual.

"Dear, dear Bellerophon," cried he, "I know not why it is, but I feel as if we should certainly see Pegasus to-day!"

And all that day he would not stir a step from Bellerophon's side; so they ate a crust of bread together, and drank some of the water of the fountain. In the

afternoon, there they sat, and Bellerophon had thrown his arm around the child, who likewise had put one of his little hands into Bellerophon's. The latter was lost in his own thoughts, and was fixing his eyes vacantly on the trunks of the trees that overshadowed the fountain, and on the grapevines that clambered up among their branches. But the gentle child was gazing down into the water; he was grieved, for Bellerophon's sake, that the hope of another day should be deceived, like so many before it; and two or three quiet tear-drops fell from his eyes, and mingled with what were said to be the many tears of Pirene, when she wept for her slain children.

But, when he least thought of it, Bellerophon felt the pressure of the child's little hand, and heard a soft, almost breathless, whisper.

"See there, dear Bellerophon! There is an image in the water!"

The young man looked down into the dimpling mirror of the fountain, and saw what he took to be the reflection of a bird which seemed to be flying at a great height in the air, with a gleam of sunshine on its snowy or silvery wings.

"What a splendid bird it must be!" said he. "And how very large it looks, though it must really be flying higher than the clouds!"

"It makes me tremble!" whispered the child. "I am afraid to look up into the air! It is very beautiful, and yet I dare only look at its image in the water. Dear Bellerophon, do you not see that it is no bird? It is the winged horse Pegasus!"

Bellerophon's heart began to throb! He gazed keenly upward, but could not see the winged creature, whether bird or horse; because, just then, it had plunged into the fleecy depths of a summer cloud. It was but a moment, however, before the object reappeared, sinking lightly down out of the cloud, although still at a vast distance from the earth. Bellerophon caught the child in his arms, and shrank back with him, so that they were both hidden among the thick shrubbery, which grew all around the fountain. Not that he was afraid of any harm, but he dreaded lest, if Pegasus caught a glimpse of them, he would fly far away, and alight in some inaccessible mountain-top. For it was really the winged horse. After they had expected him so long, he was coming to quench his thirst with the water of Pirene.

Nearer and nearer came the aerial wonder, flying in great circles, as you may have seen a dove when about to alight. Downward came Pegasus, in those wide, sweeping circles, which grew narrower, and narrower still, as he gradually approached the earth. The nigher the view of him, the more beautiful he was, and the more marvelous the sweep of his silvery wings. At last, with so light a pressure as hardly to bend the grass about the fountain, or imprint a hoof-tramp in the sand of its margin, he alighted, and, stooping his wild head, began to drink. He drew in the water, with long and pleasant sighs, and tranquil pauses of enjoyment; and then another draught, and another, and another. For nowhere in the world, or up among the clouds, did Pegasus love any water as he loved this of Pirene. And when his thirst was slaked, he cropped a

few of the honey-blossoms of the clover, delicately tasting them, but not caring to make a hearty meal, because the herbage just beneath the clouds, on the lofty sides of Mount Helicon, suited his palate better than this ordinary grass.

After thus drinking to his heart's content, and in his dainty fashion condescending to take a little food, the winged horse began to caper to and fro, and dance as it were, out of mere idleness and sport. There never was a more playful creature made than this very Pegasus. So there he frisked, in a way that it delights me to think about, fluttering his great wings as lightly as ever did a linnet, and running little races, half on earth and half in air, and which I know not whether to call a flight or a gallop. When a creature is perfectly able to fly, he sometimes chooses to run, just for the pastime of the thing; and so did Pegasus, although it cost him some little trouble to keep his hoofs so near the ground. Bellerophon, meanwhile, holding the child's hand, peeped forth from the shrubbery, and thought that never was any sight so beautiful as this, nor ever a horse's eyes so wild and spirited as those of Pegasus. It seemed a sin to think of bridling him and riding on his back.

Once or twice, Pegasus stopped, and snuffed the air, pricking up his ears, tossing his head, and turning it on all sides, as if he partly suspected some mischief or other. Seeing nothing, however, and hearing no sound, he soon began his antics again.

At length, — not that he was weary, but only idle and luxurious, — Pegasus folded his wings, and lay

down on the soft green turf. But, being too full of aerial life to remain quiet for many moments together, he soon rolled over on his back, with his four slender legs in the air. It was beautiful to see him, this one solitary creature, whose mate had never been created, but who needed no companion, and, living a great many hundred years, was as happy as the centuries were long. The more he did such things as mortal horses are accustomed to do, the less earthly and the more wonderful he seemed. Bellerophon and the child almost held their breath, partly from a delightful awe, but still more because they dreaded lest the slightest stir or murmur should send him up, with the speed of an arrow-flight, into the farthest blue of the sky.

Finally, when he had had enough of rolling over and over, Pegasus turned himself about, and, indolently, like any other horse, put out his fore legs, in order to rise from the ground; and Bellerophon, who had guessed that he would do so, darted suddenly from the thicket, and leaped astride of his back.

Yes, there he sat, on the back of the winged horse!

But what a bound did Pegasus make, when, for the first time, he felt the weight of a mortal man upon his loins! A bound, indeed! Before he had time to draw a breath, Bellerophon found himself five hundred feet aloft, and still shooting upward, while the winged horse snorted and trembled with terror and anger. Upward he went, up, up, up, until he plunged into the cold misty bosom of a cloud, at which, only a little while before, Bellerophon had been gazing, and fancying it a very pleasant spot. Then again, out of the heart of

the cloud, Pegasus shot down like a thunderbolt, as if he meant to dash both himself and his rider headlong against a rock. Then he went through about a thousand of the wildest caprioles that had ever been performed either by a bird or a horse.

I cannot tell you half that he did. He skimmed straight forward, and sideways, and backward. He reared himself erect, with his fore legs on a wreath of mist, and his hind legs on nothing at all. He flung out his heels behind, and put down his head between his legs, with his wings pointing right upward. At about two miles' height above the earth, he turned a somerset, so that Bellerophon's heels were where his head should have been, and he seemed to look down into the sky, instead of up. He twisted his head about, and, looking Bellerophon in the face, with fire flashing from his eyes, made a terrible attempt to bite him. He fluttered his pinions so wildly that one of the silver feathers was shaken out, and floating earthward, was picked up by the child, who kept it as long as he lived, in memory of Pegasus and Bellerophon.

But the latter (who, as you may judge, was as good a horseman as ever galloped) had been watching his opportunity, and at last clapped the golden bit of the enchanted bridle between the winged steed's jaws. No sooner was this done, than Pegasus became as manageable as if he had taken food, all his life, out of Bellerophon's hand. To speak what I really feel, it was almost a sadness to see so wild a creature grow suddenly so tame. And Pegasus seemed to feel it so, likewise. He looked round to Bellerophon, with the

tears in his beautiful eyes, instead of the fire that so recently flashed from them. But when Bellerophon patted his head, and spoke a few authoritative, yet kind and soothing words, another look came into the eyes of Pegasus; for he was glad at heart, after so many lonely centuries, to have found a companion and a master.

Thus it always is with winged horses, and with all such wild and solitary creatures. If you can catch and overcome them, it is the surest way to win their love.

While Pegasus had been doing his utmost to shake Bellerophon off his back, he had flown a very long distance; and they had come within sight of a lofty mountain by the time the bit was in his mouth. Bellerophon had seen this mountain before, and knew it to be Helicon, on the summit of which was the winged horse's abode. Thither (after looking gently into his rider's face, as if to ask leave) Pegasus now flew, and, alighting, waited patiently until Bellerophon should please to dismount. The young man, accordingly, leaped from his steed's back, but still held him fast by the bridle. Meeting his eyes, however, he was so affected by the gentleness of his aspect, and by the thought of the free life which Pegasus had heretofore lived, that he could not bear to keep him a prisoner, if he really desired his liberty.

Obeying this generous impulse, he slipped the enchanted bridle off the head of Pegasus, and took the bit from his mouth.

"Leave me, Pegasus!" said he. "Either leave me, or love me."

A THOUSAND MILES A DAY WAS AN EASY SPACE

In an instant, the winged horse shot almost out of sight, soaring straight upward from the summit of Mount Helicon. Being long after sunset, it was now twilight on the mountain-top, and dusky evening over all the country round about. But Pegasus flew so high that he overtook the departed day, and was bathed in the upper radiance of the sun. Ascending higher and higher, he looked like a bright speck, and, at last, could no longer be seen in the hollow waste of the sky. And Bellerophon was afraid that he should never behold him more. But, while he was lamenting his own folly, the bright speck reappeared, and drew nearer and nearer, until it descended lower than the sunshine; and, behold, Pegasus had come back! After this trial there was no more fear of the winged horse's making his escape. He and Bellerophon were friends, and put loving faith in one another.

That night they lay down and slept together, with Bellerophon's arm about the neck of Pegasus, not as a caution, but for kindness. And they awoke at peep of day, and bade one another good morning, each in his own language.

In this manner, Bellerophon and the wondrous steed spent several days, and grew better acquainted and fonder of each other all the time. They went on long aerial journeys, and sometimes ascended so high that the earth looked hardly bigger than — the moon. They visited distant countries, and amazed the inhabitants, who thought that the beautiful young man, on the back of the winged horse, must have come down out of the sky. A thousand miles a day was no more than an easy

space for the fleet Pegasus to pass over. Bellerophon was delighted with this kind of life, and would have liked nothing better than to live always in the same way, aloft in the clear atmosphere; for it was always sunny weather up there, however cheerless and rainy it might be in the lower region. But he could not forget the horrible Chimæra, which he had promised King Iobates to slay. So, at last, when he had become well accustomed to feats of horsemanship in the air, and could manage Pegasus with the least motion of his hand, and had taught him to obey his voice, he determined to attempt the performance of this perilous adventure.

At daybreak, therefore, as soon as he unclosed his eyes, he gently pinched the winged horse's ear, in order to arouse him. Pegasus immediately started from the ground, and pranced about a quarter of a mile aloft, and made a grand sweep around the mountain-top, by way of showing that he was wide awake, and ready for any kind of an excursion. During the whole of this little flight, he uttered a loud, brisk, and melodious neigh, and finally came down at Bellerophon's side, as lightly as ever you saw a sparrow hop upon a twig.

"Well done, dear Pegasus! well done, my sky-skimmer!" cried Bellerophon, fondly stroking the horse's neck. "And now, my fleet and beautiful friend, we must break our fast. To-day we are to fight the terrible Chimæra."

As soon as they had eaten their morning meal, and drank some sparkling water from a spring called Hippocrene, Pegasus held out his head, of his own accord, so that his master might put on the bridle. Then, with

a great many playful leaps and airy caperings, he showed his impatience to be gone; while Bellerophon was girding on his sword, and hanging his shield about his neck, and preparing himself for battle. When everything was ready, the rider mounted, and as was his custom, when going a long distance, ascended five miles perpendicularly, so as the better to see whither he was directing his course. He then turned the head of Pegasus towards the east, and set out for Lycia. In their flight they overtook an eagle, and came so nigh him, before he could get out of their way, that Bellerophon might easily have caught him by the leg. Hastening onward at this rate, it was still early in the forenoon when they beheld the lofty mountains of Lycia, with their deep and shaggy valleys. If Bellerophon had been told truly, it was in one of those dismal valleys that the hideous Chimæra had taken up its abode.

Being now so near their journey's end, the winged horse gradually descended with his rider; and they took advantage of some clouds that were floating over the mountain-tops, in order to conceal themselves. Hovering on the upper surface of a cloud, and peeping over its edge, Bellerophon had a pretty distinct view of the mountainous part of Lycia, and could look into all its shadowy vales at once. At first there appeared to be nothing remarkable. It was a wild, savage, and rocky tract of high and precipitous hills. In the more level part of the country, there were the ruins of houses that had been burnt, and, here and there, the carcasses of dead cattle, strewn about the pastures where they had been feeding.

"The Chimæra must have done this mischief," thought Bellerophon. "But where can the monster be?"

As I have already said, there was nothing remarkable to be detected, at first sight, in any of the valleys and dells that lay among the precipitous heights of the mountains. Nothing at all; unless, indeed, it were three spires of black smoke, which issued from what seemed to be the mouth of a cavern, and clambered sullenly into the atmosphere. Before reaching the mountain-top, these three black smoke-wreaths mingled themselves into one. The cavern was almost directly beneath the winged horse and his rider, at the distance of about a thousand feet. The smoke, as it crept heavily upward, had an ugly, sulphurous, stifling scent, which caused Pegasus to snort and Bellerophon to sneeze. So disagreeable was it to the marvelous steed (who was accustomed to breathe only the purest air), that he waved his wings, and shot half a mile out of the range of this offensive vapor.

But, on looking behind him, Bellerophon saw something that induced him first to draw the bridle, and then to turn Pegasus about. He made a sign, which the winged horse understood, and sunk slowly through the air, until his hoofs were scarcely more than a man's height above the rocky bottom of the valley. In front, as far off as you could throw a stone, was the cavern's mouth, with the three smoke-wreaths oozing out of it. And what else did Bellerophon behold there?

There seemed to be a heap of strange and terrible creatures curled up within the cavern. Their bodies

lay so close together, that Bellerophon could not distinguish them apart; but, judging by their heads, one of these creatures was a huge snake, the second a fierce lion, and the third an ugly goat. The lion and the goat were asleep: the snake was broad awake, and kept staring around him with a great pair of fiery eyes. But — and this was the most wonderful part of the matter — the three spires of smoke evidently issued from the nostrils of these three heads! So strange was the spectacle, that, though Bellerophon had been all along expecting it, the truth did not immediately occur to him, that here was the terrible three-headed Chimæra. He had found out the Chimæra's cavern. The snake, the lion, and the goat, as he supposed them to be, were not three separate creatures, but one monster!

The wicked, hateful thing! Slumbering as two thirds of it were, it still held, in its abominable claws, the remnant of an unfortunate lamb, — or possibly (but I hate to think so) it was a dear little boy, — which its three mouths had been gnawing, before two of them fell asleep!

All at once, Bellerophon started as from a dream, and knew it to be the Chimæra. Pegasus seemed to know it, at the same instant, and sent forth a neigh, that sounded like the call of a trumpet to battle. At this sound the three heads reared themselves erect, and belched out great flashes of flame. Before Bellerophon had time to consider what to do next, the monster flung itself out of the cavern and sprung straight towards him, with its immense claws extended, and its snaky tail twisting itself venomously behind. If Pegasus had

not been as nimble as a bird, both he and his rider would have been overthrown by the Chimæra's headlong rush, and thus the battle have been ended before it was well begun. But the winged horse was not to be caught so. In the twinkling of an eye he was up aloft, half-way to the clouds, snorting with anger. He shuddered, too, not with affright, but with utter disgust at the loathsomeness of this poisonous thing with three heads.

The Chimæra, on the other hand, raised itself up so as to stand absolutely on the tip-end of its tail, with its talons pawing fiercely in the air, and its three heads spluttering fire at Pegasus and his rider. My stars, how it roared, and hissed, and bellowed! Bellerophon, meanwhile, was fitting his shield on his arm, and drawing his sword.

"Now, my beloved Pegasus," he whispered in the winged horse's ear, "thou must help me to slay this insufferable monster; or else thou shalt fly back to thy solitary mountain-peak without thy friend Bellerophon. For either the Chimæra dies, or its three mouths shall gnaw this head of mine, which has slumbered upon thy neck!"

Pegasus whinnied, and, turning back his head, rubbed his nose tenderly against his rider's cheek. It was his way of telling him that, though he had wings and was an immortal horse, yet he would perish, if it were possible for immortality to perish, rather than leave Bellerophon behind.

"I thank you, Pegasus," answered Bellerophon. "Now, then, let us make a dash at the monster!"

Uttering these words, he shook the bridle; and Peg-

arms darted down askant, as swift as the flight of an arrow, right towards the Chimæra's threefold head, which, all this time, was poking itself as high as it could into the air. As he came within arm's length, Bellerophon made a cut at the monster, but was carried onward by his steed, before he could see whether the blow had been successful. Pegasus continued his course, but soon wheeled round, at about the same distance from the Chimæra as before. Bellerophon then perceived that he had cut the goat's head of the monster almost off, so that it dangled downward by the skin, and seemed quite dead.

But, to make amends, the snake's head and the lion's head had taken all the fierceness of the dead one into themselves, and spit flame, and hissed, and roared, with a vast deal more fury than before.

"Never mind, my brave Pegasus!" cried Bellerophon. "With another stroke like that, we will stop either its hissing or its roaring."

And again he shook the bridle. Dashing aslantwise, as before, the winged horse made another arrow-flight towards the Chimæra, and Bellerophon aimed another downright stroke at one of the two remaining heads, as he shot by. But this time, neither he nor Pegasus escaped so well as at first. With one of its claws, the Chimæra had given the young man a deep scratch in his shoulder, and had slightly damaged the left wing of the flying steed with the other. On his part, Bellerophon had mortally wounded the lion's head of the monster, insomuch that it now hung downward, with its fire almost extinguished, and sending out gasps of

thick black smoke. The snake's head, however (which was the only one now left), was twice as fierce and venomous as ever before. It belched forth shoots of fire five hundred yards long, and emitted hisses so loud, so harsh, and so ear-piercing, that King Iobates heard them, fifty miles off, and trembled till the throne shook under him.

"Well-a-day!" thought the poor king; "the Chimæra is certainly coming to devour me!"

Meanwhile Pegasus had again paused in the air, and neighed angrily, while sparkles of a pure crystal flame darted out of his eyes. How unlike the lurid fire of the Chimæra! The aerial steed's spirit was all aroused, and so was that of Bellerophon.

"Dost thou bleed, my immortal horse?" cried the young man, caring less for his own hurt than for the anguish of this glorious creature, that ought never to have tasted pain. "The execrable Chimæra shall pay for this mischief with his last head!"

Then he shook the bridle, shouted loudly, and guided Pegasus, not aslantwise as before, but straight at the monster's hideous front. So rapid was the onset, that it seemed but a dazzle and a flash before Bellerophon was at close gripes with his enemy.

The Chimæra, by this time, after losing its second head, had got into a red-hot passion of pain and rampant rage. It so flounced about, half on earth and partly in the air, that it was impossible to say which element it rested upon. It opened its snake-jaws to such an abominable width, that Pegasus might almost, I was going to say, have flown right down its throat,

wings outspread, rider and all! At their approach it shot out a tremendous blast of its fiery breath, and enveloped Bellerophon and his steed in a perfect atmosphere of flame, singeing the wings of Pegasus, scorching off one whole side of the young man's golden ringlets, and making them both far hotter than was comfortable, from head to foot.

But this was nothing to what followed.

When the airy rush of the winged horse had brought him within the distance of a hundred yards, the Chimæra gave a spring, and flung its huge, awkward, venomous, and utterly detestable carcass right upon poor Pegasus, clung round him with might and main, and tied up its snaky tail into a knot! Up flew the aerial steed, higher, higher, higher, above the mountain-peaks, above the clouds, and almost out of sight of the solid earth. But still the earth-born monster kept its hold, and was borne upward, along with the creature of light and air. Bellerophon, meanwhile, turning about, found himself face to face with the ugly grimness of the Chimæra's visage, and could only avoid being scorched to death or bitten right in twain by holding up his shield. Over the upper edge of the shield, he looked sternly into the savage eyes of the monster.

But the Chimæra was so mad and wild with pain, that it did not guard itself so well as might else have been the case. Perhaps, after all, the best way to fight a Chimæra is by getting as close to it as you can. In its efforts to stick its horrible iron claws into its enemy, the creature left its own breast quite exposed; and perceiving this, Bellerophon thrust his sword up to the

hilt into its cruel heart. Immediately the snaky tail untied its knot. The monster let go its hold of Pegasus, and fell from that vast height, downward; while the fire within its bosom, instead of being put out, burned fiercer than ever, and quickly began to consume the dead carcass. Thus it fell out of the sky, all aflame, and (it being nightfall before it reached the earth) was mistaken for a shooting star or a comet. But, at early sunrise, some cottagers were going to their day's labor, and saw, to their astonishment, that several acres of ground were strewn with black ashes. In the middle of a field, there was a heap of whitened bones, a great deal higher than a haystack. Nothing else was ever seen of the dreadful Chimæra!

And when Bellerophon had won the victory, he bent forward and kissed Pegasus, while the tears stood in his eyes.

"Back now, my beloved steed!" said he. "Back to the Fountain of Pirene!"

Pegasus skimmed through the air, quicker than ever he did before, and reached the fountain in a very short time. And there he found the old man leaning on his staff, and the country fellow watering his cow, and the pretty maiden filling her pitcher.

"I remember now," quoth the old man, "I saw this winged horse once before, when I was quite a lad. But he was ten times handsomer in those days."

"I own a cart-horse, worth three of him!" said the country fellow. "If this pony were mine, the first thing I should do would be to clip his wings!"

But the poor maiden said nothing, for she had al-

ways the luck to be afraid at the wrong time. So she ran away, and let her pitcher tumble down, and broke it.

"Where is the gentle child," asked Bellerophon, "who used to keep me company, and never lost his faith, and never was weary of gazing into the fountain?"

"Here am I, dear Bellerophon!" said the child, softly.

For the little boy had spent day after day on the margin of Pirene, waiting for his friend to come back; but when he perceived Bellerophon descending through the clouds, mounted on the winged horse, he had shrunk back into the shrubbery. He was a delicate and tender child, and dreaded lest the old man and the country fellow should see the tears gushing from his eyes.

"Thou hast won the victory," said he, joyfully, running to the knee of Bellerophon, who still sat on the back of Pegasus. "I knew thou wouldst."

"Yes, dear child!" replied Bellerophon, alighting from the winged horse. "But if thy faith had not helped me, I should never have waited for Pegasus, and never have gone up above the clouds, and never have conquered the terrible Chimæra. Thou, my beloved little friend, hast done it all. And now let us give Pegasus his liberty."

So he slipped off the enchanted bridle from the head of the marvelous steed.

"Be free, forevermore, my Pegasus!" cried he, with a shade of sadness in his tone. "Be as free as thou art fleet!"

But Pegasus rested his head on Bellerophon's shoulder, and would not be persuaded to take flight.

"Well then," said Bellerophon, caressing the airy horse, "thou shalt be with me, as long as thou wilt; and we will go together, forthwith, and tell King Iobates that the Chimæra is destroyed."

Then Bellerophon embraced the gentle child, and promised to come to him again, and departed. But, in after years, that child took higher flights upon the aerial steed than ever did Bellerophon, and achieved more honorable deeds than his friend's victory over the Chimæra. For, gentle and tender as he was, he grew to be a mighty poet!

ARACHNE

By Josephine Preston Peabody

NOT among mortals alone were there contests of skill, nor yet among the gods, like Pan and Apollo. Many sorrows befell men because they grew arrogant in their own devices and coveted divine honors. There was once a great hunter, Orion, who outvied the gods themselves, till they took him away from his hunting-grounds and set him in the heavens, with his sword and belt, and his hound at his heels. But at length jealousy invaded even the peaceful arts, and disaster came of spinning!

There was a certain maiden of Lydia, Arachne by name, renowned throughout the country for her skill as a weaver. She was as nimble with her fingers as Calypso, that nymph who kept Odysseus for seven years in her enchanted island. She was as untiring as Penelope, the hero's wife, who wove day after day while she watched for his return. Day in and day out, Arachne wove too. The very nymphs would gather about her loom, naiads from the water and dryads from the trees.

"Maiden," they would say, shaking the leaves or the foam from their hair, in wonder, "Pallas Athena must have taught you!"

But this did not please Arachne. She would not acknowledge herself a debtor, even to that goddess

who protected all household arts, and by whose grace alone one had any skill in them.

"I learned not of Athena," said she. "If she can weave better, let her come and try."

The nymphs shivered at this, and an aged woman, who was looking on, turned to Arachne.

"Be more heedful of your words, my daughter," said she. "The goddess may pardon you if you ask forgiveness, but do not strive for honors with the immortals."

Arachne broke her thread, and the shuttle stopped humming.

"Keep your counsel," she said. "I fear not Athena; no, nor any one else."

As she frowned at the old woman, she was amazed to see her change suddenly into one tall, majestic, beautiful, — a maiden of gray eyes and golden hair, crowned with a golden helmet. It was Athena herself.

The bystanders shrank in fear and reverence; only Arachne was unawed and held to her foolish boast.

In silence the two began to weave, and the nymphs stole nearer, coaxed by the sound of the shuttles, that seemed to be humming with delight over the two webs, — back and forth like bees.

They gazed upon the loom where the goddess stood plying her task, and they saw shapes and images come to bloom out of the wondrous colors, as sunset clouds grow to be living creatures when we watch them. And they saw that the goddess, still merciful, was spinning, as a warning for Arachne, the pictures of her own triumph over reckless gods and mortals.

In one corner of the web she made a story of her

conquest over the sea-god Poseidon. For the first king of Athens had promised to dedicate the city to that god who should bestow upon it the most useful gift. Poseidon gave the horse. But Athena gave the olive, — means of livelihood, — symbol of peace and prosperity, and the city was called after her name. Again she pictured a vain woman of Troy, who had been turned into a crane for disputing the palm of beauty with a goddess. Other corners of the web held similar images, and the whole shone like a rainbow.

Meanwhile Arachne, whose head was quite turned with vanity, embroidered her web with stories against the gods, making light of Zeus himself and of Apollo, and portraying them as birds and beasts. But she wove with marvelous skill; the creatures seemed to breathe and speak, yet it was all as fine as the gossamer that you find on the grass before rain.

Athena herself was amazed. Not even her wrath at the girl's insolence could wholly overcome her wonder. For an instant she stood entranced; then she tore the web across, and three times she touched Arachne's forehead with her spindle.

"Live on, Arachne," she said. "And since it is your glory to weave, you and yours must weave forever." So saying, she sprinkled upon the maiden a certain magical potion.

Away went Arachne's beauty; then her very human form shrank to that of a spider, and so remained. As a spider she spent all her days weaving and weaving; and you may see something like her handiwork any day among the rafters.

PYGMALION AND GALATEA

By Josephine Preston Peabody

THE island of Cyprus was dear to the heart of Venus. There her temples were kept with honor, and there, some say, she watched with the Loves and Graces over the long enchanted sleep of Adonis. This youth, a hunter whom she had dearly loved, had died of a wound from the tusk of a wild boar: but the bitter grief of Venus had won over even the powers of Hades. For six months of every year, Adonis had to live as a Shade in the world of the dead; but for the rest of time he was free to breathe the upper air. Here in Cyprus the people came to worship him as a god, for the sake of Venus who loved him; and here, if any called upon her, she was like to listen.

Now there once lived in Cyprus a young sculptor, Pygmalion by name, who thought nothing on earth so beautiful as the white marble folk that live without faults and never grow old. Indeed, he said that he would never marry a mortal woman, and people began to think that his daily life among marble creatures was hardening his heart altogether.

But it chanced that Pygmalion fell to work upon an ivory statue of a maiden, so lovely that it must have moved to envy every breathing creature that came to look upon it. With a happy heart the sculptor wrought

day by day, giving it all the beauty of his dreams, until, when the work was completed, he felt powerless to leave it. He was bound to it by the tie of his highest aspiration, his most perfect ideal, his most patient work.

Day after day the ivory maiden looked down at him silently, and he looked back at her until he felt that he loved her more than anything else in the world. He thought of her no longer as a statue, but as the dear companion of his life; and the whim grew upon him like an enchantment. He named her Galatea, and arrayed her like a princess; he hung jewels about her neck, and made all his home beautiful and fit for such a presence.

Now the festival of Venus was at hand, and Pygmalion, like all who loved Beauty, joined the worshipers. In the temple victims were offered, solemn rites were held, and votaries from many lands came to pray the favor of the goddess. At length Pygmalion himself approached the altar and made his prayer.

"Goddess," he said, "who hast vouchsafed to me this gift of beauty, give me a perfect love, likewise, and let me have for bride, one like my ivory maiden." And Venus heard.

Home to his house of dreams went the sculptor, loath to be parted for a day from his statue, Galatea. There she stood, looking down upon him silently, and he looked back at her. Surely the sunset had shed a flush of life upon her whiteness.

He drew near in wonder and delight, and felt, instead of the chill air that was wont to wake him out of his spell, a gentle warmth around her, like the breath

of a plant. He touched her hand, and it yielded like the hand of one living! Doubting his senses, yet fearing to reassure himself, Pygmalion kissed the statue.

In an instant the maiden's face bloomed like a waking rose, her hair shone golden as returning sunlight; she lifted her ivory eyelids and smiled at him. The statue herself had awakened, and she stepped down from the pedestal, into the arms of her creator, alive!

There was a dream that came true.

ATALANTA'S RACE

By Josephine Preston Peabody

EVEN if Prince Meleager had lived, it is doubtful if he could ever have won Atalanta to be his wife. The maiden was resolved to live unwed, and at last she devised a plan to be rid of all her suitors. She was known far and wide as the swiftest runner of her time; and so she said that she would only marry that man who could outstrip her in the race, but that all who dared to try and failed must be put to death.

This threat did not dishearten all of the suitors, however, and to her grief, for she was not cruel, they held her to her promise. On a certain day the few bold men who were to try their fortune made ready, and chose young Hippomenes as judge. He sat watching them before the word was given, and sadly wondered that any brave man should risk his life merely to win a bride. But when Atalanta stood ready for the contest, he was amazed by her beauty. She looked like Hebe, goddess of young health, who is a glad serving-maiden to the gods when they sit at feast.

The signal was given, and, as she and the suitors darted away, flight made her more enchanting than ever. Just as a wind brings sparkles to the water and laughter to the trees, haste fanned her loveliness to a glow.

Alas for the suitors! She ran as if Hermes had lent her his winged sandals. The young men, skilled as they were, grew heavy with weariness and despair. For all their efforts, they seemed to lag like ships in a calm, while Atalanta flew before them in some favoring breeze — and reached the goal!

To the sorrow of all on-lookers, the suitors were led away; but the judge himself, Hippomenes, rose and begged leave to try his fortune. As Atalanta listened, and looked at him, her heart was filled with pity, and she would willingly have let him win the race to save him from defeat and death; for he was comely and younger than the others. But her friends urged her to rest and make ready, and she consented, with an unwilling heart.

Meanwhile Hippomenes prayed within himself to Venus: "Goddess of Love, give ear, and send me good speed. Let me be swift to win as I have been swift to love her."

Now Venus, who was not far off, — for she had already moved the heart of Hippomenes to love, — came to his side invisibly, slipped into his hand three wondrous golden apples, and whispered a word of counsel in his ear.

The signal was given; youth and maiden started over the course. They went so like the wind that they left not a footprint. The people cheered on Hippomenes, eager that such valor should win. But the course was long, and soon fatigue seemed to clutch at his throat, the light shook before his eyes, and, even as he pressed on, the maiden passed him by.

THE SIGNAL WAS GIVEN, AND AS SHE AND THE SUITORS DARTED AWAY FLIGHT MADE HER MORE ENCHANTING THAN EVER. JUST AS A WIND BRINGS SPARKLES TO THE WATER AND LAUGHTER TO THE TREES, HASTE FANNED HER LOVELINESS TO A GLOW

At that instant Hippomenes tossed ahead one of the golden apples. The rolling bright thing caught Atalanta's eye, and full of wonder she stooped to pick it up. Hippomenes ran on. As he heard the flutter of her tunic close behind him, he flung aside another golden apple, and another moment was lost to the girl. Who could pass by such a marvel? The goal was near and Hippomenes was ahead, but once again Atalanta caught up with him, and they sped side by side like two dragonflies. For an instant his heart failed him; then, with a last prayer to Venus, he flung down the last apple. The maiden glanced at it, wavered, and would have left it where it had fallen, had not Venus turned her head for a second and given her a sudden wish to possess it. Against her will she turned to pick up the golden apple, and Hippomenes touched the goal.

So he won that perilous maiden; and as for Atalanta, she was glad to marry such a valorous man. By this time she understood so well what it was like to be pursued, that she had lost a little of her pleasure in hunting.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

By Josephine Preston Peabody

ONCE upon a time, through that Destiny that overrules the gods, Love himself gave up his immortal heart to a mortal maiden. And thus it came to pass.

There was a certain king who had three beautiful daughters. The two elder married princes of great renown; but Psyche, the youngest, was so radiantly fair that no suitor seemed worthy of her. People thronged to see her pass through the city, and sang hymns in her praise, while strangers took her for the very goddess of beauty herself.

This angered Venus, and she resolved to cast down her earthly rival. One day, therefore, she called hither her son Love (Cupid, some name him), and bade him sharpen his weapons. He is an archer more to be dreaded than Apollo, for Apollo's arrows take life, but Love's bring joy or sorrow for a whole life long.

"Come, Love," said Venus. "There is a mortal maid who robs me of my honors in yonder city. Avenge your mother. Wound this precious Psyche, and let her fall in love with some churlish creature mean in the eyes of all men."

Cupid made ready his weapons, and flew down to earth invisibly. At that moment Psyche was asleep in her chamber; but he touched her heart with his golden

arrow of love, and she opened her eyes so suddenly that he started (forgetting that he was invisible), and wounded himself with his own shaft. Heedless of the hurt, moved only by the loveliness of the maiden, he hastened to pour over her locks the healing joy that he ever kept by him, undoing all his work. Back to her dream the princess went, unshadowed by any thought of love. But Cupid, not so light of heart, returned to the heavens, saying not a word of what had passed.

Venus waited long; then, seeing that Psyche's heart had somehow escaped love, she sent a spell upon the maiden From that time, lovely as she was, not a suitor came to woo; and her parents, who desired to see her a queen at least, made a journey to the Oracle, and asked counsel.

Said the voice: "The princess Psyche shall never wed a mortal. She shall be given to one who waits for her on yonder mountain; he overcomes gods and men."

At this terrible sentence the poor parents were half distraught, and the people gave themselves up to grief at the fate in store for their beloved princess. Psyche alone bowed to her destiny. "We have angered Venus unwittingly," she said, "and all for sake of me, heedless maiden that I am! Give me up, therefore, dear father and mother. If I atone, it may be that the city will prosper once more."

So she besought them, until, after many unavailing denials, the parents consented; and with a great company of people they led Psyche up the mountain,— as an offering to the monster of whom the Oracle had spoken, — and left her there alone.

Full of courage, yet in a secret agony of grief, she watched her kindred and her people wind down the mountain-path, too sad to look back, until they were lost to sight. Then, indeed, she wept, but a sudden breeze drew near, dried her tears, and caressed her hair, seeming to murmur comfort. In truth, it was Zephyr, the kindly West Wind, come to befriend her; and as she took heart, feeling some benignant presence, he lifted her in his arms, and carried her on wings as even as a sea-gull's, over the crest of the fateful mountain and into a valley below. There he left her, resting on a bank of hospitable grass, and there the princess fell asleep.

When she awoke, it was near sunset. She looked about her for some sign of the monster's approach; she wondered, then, if her grievous trial had been but a dream. Near by she saw a sheltering forest, whose young trees seemed to beckon as one maid beckons to another; and eager for the protection of the dryads, she went thither.

The call of running waters drew her farther and farther, till she came out upon an open place, where there was a wide pool. A fountain fluttered gladly in the midst of it, and beyond there stretched a white palace wonderful to see. Coaxed by the bright promise of the place, she drew near, and, seeing no one, entered softly. It was all kinglier than her father's home, and as she stood in wonder and awe, soft airs stirred about her. Little by little the silence grew murmurous like the woods, and one voice, sweeter than the rest, took words. "All that you see is yours, gentle

high princess," it said. "Fear nothing; only command us, for we are here to serve you."

Full of amazement and delight, Psyche followed the voice from hall to hall, and through the lordly rooms, beautiful with everything that could delight a young princess. No pleasant thing was lacking. There was even a pool, brightly tiled and fed with running waters, where she bathed her weary limbs; and after she had put on the new and beautiful raiment that lay ready for her, she sat down to break her fast, waited upon and sung to by the unseen spirits.

Surely he whom the Oracle had called her husband was no monster, but some beneficent power, invisible like all the rest. When daylight waned he came, and his voice, the beautiful voice of a god, inspired her to trust her strange destiny and to look and long for his return. Often she begged him to stay with her through the day, that she might see his face; but this he would not grant.

"Never doubt me, dearest Psyche," said he. "Perhaps you would fear if you saw me, and love is all I ask. There is a necessity that keeps me hidden now. Only believe."

So for many days Psyche was content; but when she grew used to happiness, she thought once more of her parents mourning her as lost, and of her sisters, who shared the lot of mortals while she lived as a goddess. One night she told her husband of these regrets, and begged that her sisters at least might come to see her. He sighed, but did not refuse.

"Zephyr shall bring them hither," said he. And

on the following morning, swift as a bird, the West Wind came over the crest of the high mountain and down into the enchanted valley, bearing her two sisters.

They greeted Psyche with joy and amazement, hardly knowing how they had come hither. But when this fairest of the sisters led them through her palace and showed them all the treasures that were hers, envy grew in their hearts and choked their old love. Even while they sat at feast with her, they grew more and more bitter; and hoping to find some little flaw in her good fortune, they asked a thousand questions.

"Where is your husband?" said they. "And why is he not here with you?"

"Ah," stammered Psyche. "All the day long — he is gone, hunting upon the mountains."

"But what does he look like?" they asked; and Psyche could find no answer.

When they learned that she had never seen him, they laughed her faith to scorn.

"Poor Psyche," they said. "You are walking in a dream. Wake, before it is too late. Have you forgotten what the Oracle decreed, — that you were destined for a dreadful creature, the fear of gods and men? And are you deceived by this show of kindliness? We have come to warn you. The people told us, as we came over the mountain, that your husband is a dragon, who feeds you well for the present, that he may feast the better, some day soon. What is it that you trust? Good words! But only take a dagger some night, and when the monster is asleep go, light a lamp, and look at him.

You can put him to death easily, and all his riches will be yours — and ours."

Psyche heard this wicked plan with horror. Nevertheless, after her sisters were gone, she brooded over what they had said, not seeing their evil intent; and she came to find some wisdom in their words. Little by little, suspicion ate, like a moth, into her lovely mind; and at nightfall, in shame and fear, she hid a lamp and a dagger in her chamber. Towards midnight, when her husband was fast asleep, up she rose, hardly daring to breathe; and coming softly to his side, she uncovered the lamp to see some horror.

But there the youngest of the gods lay sleeping, — most beautiful, most irresistible of all immortals. His hair shone golden as the sun, his face was radiant as dear Springtime, and from his shoulders sprang two rainbow wings.

Poor Psyche was overcome with self-reproach. As she leaned towards him, filled with worship, her trembling hands held the lamp ill, and some burning oil fell upon Love's shoulder and awakened him.

He opened his eyes, to see at once his bride and the dark suspicion in her heart.

"O doubting Psyche!" he exclaimed with sudden grief, — and then he flew away, out of the window.

Wild with sorrow, Psyche tried to follow, but she fell to the ground instead. When she recovered her senses, she stared about her. She was alone, and the place was beautiful no longer. Garden and palace had vanished with Love.

THE TRIAL OF PSYCHE

By Josephine Preston Peabody

OVER mountains and valleys Psyche journeyed alone until she came to the city where her two envious sisters lived with the princes whom they had married. She stayed with them only long enough to tell the story of her unbelief and its penalty. Then she set out again to search for Love.

As she wandered one day, travel-worn but not hopeless, she saw a lofty palace on a hill near by, and she turned her steps thither. The place seemed deserted. Within the hall she saw no human being, — only heaps of grain, loose ears of corn half torn from the husk, wheat and barley, alike scattered in confusion on the floor. Without delay, she set to work binding the sheaves together and gathering the scattered ears of corn in seemly wise, as a princess would wish to see them. While she was in the midst of her task, a voice startled her, and she looked up to behold Demeter herself, the goddess of the harvest, smiling upon her with good will.

"Dear Psyche," said Demeter, "you are worthy of happiness, and you may find it yet. But since you have displeased Venus, go to her and ask her favor. Perhaps your patience will win her pardon."

These motherly words gave Psyche heart, and she

reverently took leave of the goddess and set out for the temple of Venus. Most humbly she offered up her prayer, but Venus could not look at her earthly beauty without anger.

"Vain girl," said she, "perhaps you have come to make amends for the wound you dealt your husband; you shall do so. Such clever people can always find work!"

Then she led Psyche into a great chamber heaped high with mingled grain, beans, and lintels (the food of her doves), and bade her separate them all and have them ready in seemly fashion by night. Heracles would have been helpless before such a vexatious task; and poor Psyche, left alone in this desert of grain, had not courage to begin. But even as she sat there, a moving thread of black crawled across the floor from a crevice in the wall; and bending nearer, she saw that a great army of ants in columns had come to her aid. The zealous little creatures worked in swarms, with such industry over the work they like best, that, when Venus came at night, she found the task completed.

"Deceitful girl," she cried, shaking the roses out of her hair with impatience, "this is my son's work, not yours. But he will soon forget you. Eat this black bread if you are hungry, and refresh your dull mind with sleep. To-morrow you will need more wit."

Psyche wondered what new misfortune could be in store for her. But when morning came, Venus led her to the brink of a river, and, pointing to the wood across the water, said, "Go now to yonder grove, where the sheep with the golden fleece are wont to browse.

Bring me a golden lock from every one of them, or you must go your way and never come back again."

This seemed not difficult, and Psyche obediently bade the goddess farewell, and stepped into the water, ready to wade across. But as Venus disappeared, the reeds sang louder and the nymphs of the river, looking up sweetly, blew bubbles to the surface and murmured: "Nay, nay, have a care, Psyche. This flock has not the gentle ways of sheep. While the sun burns aloft, they are themselves as fierce as flame; but when the shadows are long, they go to rest and sleep, under the trees; and you may cross the river without fear and pick the golden fleece off the briers in the pasture."

Thanking the water-creatures, Psyche sat down to rest near them, and when the time came, she crossed in safety and followed their counsel. By twilight she returned to Venus with her arms full of shining fleece.

"No mortal wit did this," said Venus angrily. "But if you care to prove your readiness, go now, with this little box, down to Proserpina and ask her to enclose in it some of her beauty, for I have grown pale in caring for my wounded son."

It needed not the last taunt to sadden Psyche. She knew that it was not for mortals to go into Hades and return alive; and feeling that Love had forsaken her, she was minded to accept her doom as soon as might be.

But even as she hastened towards the descent, another friendly voice detained her. "Stay, Psyche, I know your grief. Only give ear and you shall learn a safe way through all these trials." And the voice went on to tell her how one might avoid all the dangers of

Hades and come out unscathed. (But such a secret could not pass from mouth to mouth, with the rest of the story.)

"And be sure," added the voice, "when Proserpina has returned the box, not to open it, however much you may long to do so."

Psyche gave heed, and by this device, whatever it was, she found her way into Hades safely, and made her errand known to Proserpina, and was soon in the upper world again, wearied but hopeful.

"Surely Love has not forgotten me," she said. "But humbled as I am and worn with toil, how shall I ever please him? Venus can never need all the beauty in this casket; and since I use it for Love's sake, it must be right to take some." So saying, she opened the box, heedless as Pandora! The spells and potions of Hades are not for mortal maids, and no sooner had she inhaled the strange aroma than she fell down like one dead, quite overcome.

But it happened that Love himself was recovered from his wound, and he had secretly fled from his chamber to seek out and rescue Psyche. He found her lying by the wayside; he gathered into the casket what remained of the philter, and awoke his beloved.

"Take comfort," he said, smiling. "Return to our mother and do her bidding till I come again."

Away he flew; and while Psyche went cheerily homeward, he hastened up to Olympus, where all the gods sat feasting, and begged them to intercede for him with his angry mother.

They heard his story and their hearts were touched.

Zeus himself coaxed Venus with kind words till at last she relented, and remembered that anger hurt her beauty, and smiled once more. All the younger gods were for welcoming Psyche at once, and Hermes was sent to bring her hither. The maiden came, a shy newcomer among those bright creatures. She took the cup that Hebe held out to her, drank the divine ambrosia, and became immortal.

Light came to her face like moonrise, two radiant wings sprang from her shoulders; and even as a butterfly bursts from its dull cocoon, so the human Psyche blossomed into immortality.

Love took her by the hand, and they were never parted any more.

MYTHS OF SCANDINAVIA

THE GIANT BUILDER

By Abbie Farwell Brown

AGES and ages ago, when the world was first made, the gods decided to build a beautiful city high above the heavens, the most glorious and wonderful city that ever was known. Asgard was to be its name, and it was to stand on Ida Plain under the shade of Yggdrasil, the great tree whose roots were underneath the earth.

First of all they built a house with a silver roof, where there were seats for all the twelve chiefs. In the midst, and high above the rest, was the wonder-throne of Odin the All-Father, whence he could see everything that happened in the sky or on the earth or in the sea. Next they made a fair house for Queen Frigg and her lovely daughters. Then they built a smithy, with its great hammers, tongs, anvils, and bellows, where the gods could work at their favorite trade, the making of beautiful things out of gold; which they did so well that folk name that time the Golden Age. Afterwards, as they had more leisure, they built separate houses for all the Æsir, each more beautiful than the preceding, for of course they were continually growing more skillful. They saved Father Odin's palace until the last, for they meant this to be the largest and the most splendid of all.

Gladsheim, the home of joy, was the name of Odin's

house, and it was built all of gold, set in the midst of a wood whereof the trees had leaves of ruddy gold,—like an autumn-gilded forest. For the safety of All-Father it was surrounded by a roaring river and by a high picket fence; and there was a great courtyard within.

The glory of Gladsheim was its wondrous hall, radiant with gold, the most lovely room that time has ever seen. Valhalla, the Hall of Heroes, was the name of it, and it was roofed with the mighty shields of warriors. The ceiling was made of interlacing spears, and there was a portal at the west end before which hung a great gray wolf, while over him a fierce eagle hovered. The hall was so huge that it had 540 gates, through each of which 800 men could march abreast. Indeed, there needed to be room, for this was the hall where every morning Odin received all the brave warriors who had died in battle on the earth below; and there were many heroes in those days.

This was the reward which the gods gave to courage. When a hero had gloriously lost his life, the Valkyries, the nine warrior daughters of Odin, brought his body up to Valhalla on their white horses that gallop the clouds. There they lived forever after in happiness, enjoying the things that they had most loved upon earth. Every morning they armed themselves and went out to fight with one another in the great courtyard. It was a wondrous game, wondrously played. No matter how often a hero was killed, he became alive again in time to return perfectly well to Valhalla, where he ate a delicious breakfast with the Æsir; while the beautiful Valkyries who had first brought him thither waited at

table and poured the blessed mead, which only the immortal taste. A happy life it was for the heroes, and a happy life for all who dwelt in Asgard; for this was before trouble had come among the gods, following the mischief of Loki.

This is how the trouble began. From the beginning of time, the giants had been unfriendly to the Æsir, because the giants were older and huger and more wicked; besides, they were jealous because the good Æsir were fast gaining more wisdom and power than the giants had ever known. It was the Æsir who set the fair brother and sister, Sun and Moon, in the sky to give light to men; and it was they also who made the jeweled stars out of sparks from the place of fire. The giants hated the Æsir, and tried all in their power to injure them and the men of the earth below, whom the Æsir loved and cared for. The gods had already built a wall around Midgard, the world of men, to keep the giants out; built it of the bushy eyebrows of Ymir, the oldest and hugest of giants. Between Asgard and the giants flowed Iffing, the great river on which ice never formed, and which the gods crossed on the rainbow bridge. But this was not protection enough. Their beautiful new city needed a fortress.

So the word went forth in Asgard, "We must build us a fortress against the giants; the hugest, strongest, finest fortress that ever was built."

Now one day, soon after they had announced this decision, there came a mighty man stalking up the rainbow bridge that led to Asgard city.

"Who goes there!" cried Heimdal, the watchman,

whose eyes were so keen that he could see for a hundred miles around, and whose ears were so sharp that he could hear the grass growing in the meadow and the wool on the backs of the sheep. "Who goes there! No one can enter Asgard if I say no."

"I am a builder," said the stranger, who was a huge fellow with sleeves rolled up to show the iron muscles of his arms. "I am a builder of strong towers, and I have heard that the folk of Asgard need one to help them raise a fair fortress in their city."

Heimdal looked at the stranger narrowly, for there was that about him which his sharp eyes did not like. But he made no answer, only blew on his golden horn, which was so loud that it sounded through all the world. At this signal all the Æsir came running to the rainbow bridge, from wherever they happened to be, to find out who was coming to Asgard. For it was Heimdal's duty ever to warn them of the approach of the unknown.

"This fellow says he is a builder," quoth Heimdal. "And he would fain build us a fortress in the city."

"Ay, that I would," nodded the stranger. "Look at my iron arm; look at my broad back; look at my shoulders. Am I not the workman you need?"

"Truly, he is a mighty figure," vowed Odin, looking at him approvingly. "How long will it take you alone to build our fortress? We can allow but one stranger at a time within our city, for safety's sake."

"In three half-years," replied the stranger, "I will undertake to build for you a castle so strong that not even the giants, should they swarm hither over Midgard, — not even they could enter without your leave."

"Aha!" cried Father Odin, well pleased at this offer. "And what reward do you ask, friend, for help so timely?"

The stranger hummed and hawed and pulled his long beard while he thought. Then he spoke suddenly, as if the idea had just come into his mind. "I will name my price, friends," he said; "a small price for so great a deed. I ask you to give me Freia for my wife, and those two sparkling jewels, the Sun and Moon."

At this demand the gods looked grave, for Freia was their dearest treasure. She was the most beautiful maid who ever lived, the light and life of heaven, and if she should leave Asgard, joy would go with her; while the Sun and Moon were the light and life of the Æsir's children, men, who lived in the little world below. But Loki the sly whispered that they would be safe enough if they made another condition on their part, so hard that the builder could not fulfill it. After thinking cautiously, he spoke for them all.

"Mighty man," quoth he, "we are willing to agree to your price — upon one condition. It is too long a time that you ask; we cannot wait three half-years for our castle; that is equal to three centuries when one is in a hurry. See that you finish the fort without help in one winter, one short winter, and you shall have fair Freia with the Sun and Moon. But if, on the first day of summer, one stone is wanting to the walls, or if any one has given you aid in the building, then your reward is lost, and you shall depart without payment." So spoke Loki, in the name of all the gods; but the plan was his own.

At first the stranger shook his head and frowned, saying that in so short a time no one unaided could complete the undertaking. At last he made another offer. "Let me have but my good horse to help me, and I will try," he urged. "Let me bring the useful Svadilföri with me to the task, and I will finish the work in one winter of short days, or lose my reward. Surely, you will not deny me this little help, from one four-footed friend."

Then again the Æsir consulted, and the wiser of them were doubtful whether it were best to accept the stranger's offer so strangely made. But again Loki urged them to accept. "Surely, there is no harm," he said. "Even with his old horse to help him, he cannot build the castle in the promised time. We shall gain a fortress without trouble and with never a price to pay."

Loki was so eager that, although the other Æsir did not like this crafty way of making bargains, they finally consented. Then in the presence of the heroes, with the Valkyries and Mimer's head for witnesses, the stranger and the Æsir gave solemn promise that the bargain should be kept.

On the first day of winter the strange builder began his work, and wondrous was the way he set about it. His strength seemed as the strength of a hundred men. As for his horse Svadilföri, he did more work by half than even the mighty builder. In the night he dragged the enormous rocks that were to be used in building the castle, rocks as big as mountains of the earth; while in the daytime the stranger piled them into place with his iron arms. The Æsir watched him with amazement;

never was seen such strength in Asgard. Neither Tyr the stout nor Thor the strong could match the power of the stranger. The gods began to look at one another uneasily. Who was this mighty one who had come among them, and what if after all he should win his reward? Freia trembled in her palace, and the Sun and Moon grew dim with fear.

Still the work went on, and the fort was piling higher and higher, by day and by night. There were but three days left before the end of winter, and already the building was so tall and so strong that it was safe from the attacks of any giant. The Æsir were delighted with their fine new castle; but their pride was dimmed by the fear that it must be paid for at all too costly a price. For only the gateway remained to be completed, and unless the stranger should fail to finish that in the next three days, they must give him Freia with the Sun and Moon.

The Æsir held a meeting upon Ida Plain, a meeting full of fear and anger. At last they realized what they had done, — they had made a bargain with one of the giants, their enemies; and if he won the prize, it would mean sorrow and darkness in heaven and upon earth. "How did we happen to agree to so mad a bargain?" they asked one another. "Who suggested the wicked plan which bids fair to cost us all that we most cherish?" Then they remembered that it was Loki who had made the plan; it was he who had insisted that it be carried out; and they blamed him for all the trouble.

"It is your counsels, Loki, that have brought this danger upon us," quoth Father Odin, frowning. "You

chose the way of guile, which is not our way. It now remains for you to help us by guile, if you can. But if you cannot save for us Freia and the Sun and Moon, you shall die. This is my word." All the other Æsir agreed that this was just. Thor alone was away hunting evil demons at the other end of the world, so he did not know what was going on, and what dangers were threatening Asgard.

Loki was much frightened at the word of All-Father. "It was my fault," he cried, "but how was I to know that he was a giant? He had disguised himself so that he seemed but a strong man. And as for his horse,—it looks much like that of other folk. If it were not for the horse, he could not finish the work. Ha! I have a thought! The builder shall not finish the gate; the giant shall not receive his payment. I will cheat the fellow."

Now it was the last night of winter, and there remained but a few stones to put in place on the top of the wondrous gateway. The giant was sure of his prize, and chuckled to himself as he went out with his horse to drag the remaining stones; for he did not know that the Æsir had guessed at last who he was, and that Loki was plotting to outwit him. Hardly had he gone to work when out of the wood came running a pretty little mare, who neighed to Svadilföri as if inviting the tired horse to leave his work and come to the green fields for a holiday.

Svadilföri, you must remember, had been working hard all winter, with never a sight of four-footed creature of his kind, and he was very lonesome and tired of

dragging stones. Giving a snort of disobedience, off he ran after this new friend towards the grassy meadows. Off went the giant after him, howling with rage, and running for dear life, as he saw not only his horse but his chance of success slipping out of reach. It was a mad chase, and all Asgard thundered with the noise of galloping hoofs and the giant's mighty tread. The mare who raced ahead was Loki in disguise, and he led Svadilföri far out of reach, to a hidden meadow that he knew; so that the giant howled and panted up and down all night long, without catching even a sight of his horse.

Now when the morning came the gateway was still unfinished, and night and winter had ended at the same hour. The giant's time was over, and he had forfeited his reward. The Æsir came flocking to the gateway, and how they laughed and triumphed when they found three stones wanting to complete the gate!

"You have failed, fellow," judged Father Odin sternly, "and no price shall we pay for work that is still undone. You have failed. Leave Asgard quickly; we have seen all we want of you and of your race."

Then the giant knew that he was discovered, and he was mad with rage. "It was a trick!" he bellowed, assuming his own proper form, which was huge as a mountain, and towered high beside the fortress that he had built. "It was a wicked trick. You shall pay for this in one way or another. I cannot tear down the castle which, ungrateful ones, I have built you, stronger than the strength of any giant. But I will demolish the rest of your shining city!" Indeed, he would have

done so in his mighty rage; but at this moment Thor, whom Heimdal had called from the end of the earth by one blast of the golden horn, came rushing to the rescue, drawn in his chariot of goats. Thor jumped to the ground close beside the giant, and before that huge fellow knew what had happened, his head was rolling upon the ground at Father Odin's feet; for with one blow Thor had put an end to the giant's wickedness and had saved Asgard.

"This is the reward you deserve!" Thor cried. "Not Freia nor the Sun and Moon, but the death that I have in store for all the enemies of the Æsir."

In this extraordinary way the noble city of Asgard was made safe and complete by the addition of a fortress which no one, not even the giant who built it, could injure, it was so wonder-strong. But always at the top of the gate were lacking three great stones that no one was mighty enough to lift. This was a reminder to the Æsir that now they had the race of giants for their everlasting enemies. And though Loki's trick had saved them Freia, and for the world the Sun and Moon, it was the beginning of trouble in Asgard which lasted as long as Loki lived to make mischief with his guile.

THOR'S ADVENTURES AMONG THE JÖTUNS

By Julia Goddard

ONCE upon a time Thor set out upon his travels, taking Loki with him, for despite Loki's spirit of mischief he often aided Thor, who doubtless, in the present expedition, felt that Loki might be of use to him.

So they set off together in Thor's chariot, drawn by the two strong he-goats, and as night drew nigh, stopped at the hut of a peasant, where they asked food and shelter.

"Food I have none to give you," said the peasant. "I am a poor man and not one even to give supper to my children, but if you like to rest under my roof you are welcome to do so."

"Never mind the food; I can manage that," said Thor, dismounting from the chariot and entering the hut.

It was a poor place, and not at all fitted to receive one of the Asi, but Thor was glad enough to meet with it, wretched as it was.

"You can kill the goats," said he; "they will make us an excellent meal."

The peasant could not help thinking that it was a pity to kill two such fine animals; but wisely thinking

that this was no affair of his, and that the stranger had a right to do as he pleased with his own, he set himself to obey Thor's orders, and with the help of his daughter Raska soon spread a savory repast before the hungry god and his attendant.

"Sit down, all of you," said Thor; "there is enough and to spare."

So they all sat down, and the peasant and his children shared a more plentiful meal than had fallen to their lot lately. Thor and Loki also did ample justice to the food, and when supper was over the thunder-god bade the peasant gather the bones and place them in the goatskins, and making them into a bundle he left them on the floor until the next morning.

When the morning came and the early sun shone in through the crevices, Thor raised his hammer, and instead of the bundle of bones the peasant and his son and daughter saw the two goats standing as fresh and lively as if nothing had happened to them, saving that one of them halted a little in his walk.

When they sought to learn why this should be, it was found that Thialfe, the boy, in getting the marrow out of one of the bones, had broken it, and it was this that caused the goat to go lame.

Thor was very angry, and was very near killing not only Thialfe but also the peasant and his daughter Raska, but they begged so hard for their lives that he consented to spare them on condition that the boy and girl should follow him in his travels.

To this they agreed, and Thor, leaving the chariot and goats in the peasant's care, went on his journey,

giving Thialfe, who was a very swift runner, his wallet to carry.

On and on they journeyed until they came to a great sea.

"How are we to get over this?" asked Loki.

"Swim across it," replied Thor.

And in they all plunged, for Thialfe and Raska were used to a hardy life, and so were able to swim with scarcely more weariness than Thor and Loki, and were not long in reaching the opposite shore.

"The country does not improve," said Loki, looking round upon the desolate plain that lay outstretched between them and the borders of a dark forest, which they could just see in the far distance. One or two huge rocks thrust their jagged points high into the air, and great blocks of stone were scattered about, but there was no sign of herbage and not a tree to be seen nearer than the forest belt bounding the horizon. Heavy gray clouds were drawing nearer and nearer to the dreary earth, and twilight was fast approaching. "It looks not well, in good sooth," answered Thor, "but we must push on and perhaps may find it better as we go onward. Besides, night is drawing nigh, and as there are no dwellings to be seen we must try to gain the shelter of the forest before it is too dark to see where we are going."

So they pushed on, and though they looked to the right hand and to the left, soon found that they were in a land where no men lived. There was, therefore, nothing to be done but to quicken their speed, in order to reach the shelter of the forest. But though they

strove to the utmost, the twilight deepened into darkness and the darkness became so deep by the time they reached the forest, that they only knew they had arrived there by Loki's striking his head against a low branch, and soon after this Thor cried out, —

"Good luck! I have found a house. Follow close after me and we will make ourselves comfortable for the night."

For Thor in groping along had come to what he supposed to be a wall of solid masonry.

"Where are you?" asked Loki, "for it is so dark that I cannot see you."

"Here," answered Thor, stretching out his hand; "take hold and follow me."

So Loki clutched Thor's arm, and Thialfe in turn seized the arm of Loki, whilst Raska clung to her brother and wished herself safe at home in her father's hut.

And thus they groped their way along the wall, seeking to find an entrance to the house.

At last Thor found a huge entrance opening into a wide hall, and passing through this they turned to the left into a large room which was quite empty, and here, after eating some food, they stretched themselves upon the hard floor and wearied out with the day's march, soon fell asleep.

But they did not sleep long. Their slumbers were broken by a rumbling sound as of a coming earthquake; the walls of the house shook, and peals of thunder echoed through the lofty chamber.

Thor sprang up. "We are scarcely safe here," he

said; "let us seek some other room." Loki jumped up speedily, as did also Thialfe and Raska, who were in a great fright, wondering what dreadful thing was going to happen to them. They willingly followed Thor, hoping to find a safer place.

To the right they saw another room like a long gallery with a huge doorway, and into this Loki, Thialfe, and Raska crept, choosing the farthest corner of it; but Thor took his stand at the doorway to be on the watch if any fresh danger should threaten them.

After a somewhat uncomfortable rest, Loki, Thialfe, and Raska were not sorry to find that the day had dawned, though as there were no windows in the house, they only knew it by hearing the cock crow.

Thor was better off, for the doorway was so wide that the sunlight came pouring in without hindrance. Indeed the huge size of the doorway made Thor think that the builder must have given up all hope of ever finding a door large enough to fit into it.

He strolled away from the house, and the first thing that he saw was a huge giant fast asleep upon the greensward; and now he knew that the thunder that had so frightened them in the night had been nothing more or less than the loud snoring of the giant.

So wroth was Thor at the thought that such a thing should have made him afraid, that he fastened on his belt of strength and drew his sword and made towards the giant as though he would kill him on the spot.

But the giant, opening his great round eyes, stared so steadily at Thor that the god became mazed and could do nothing but stare in return.

At last, however, he found voice to ask, "What is your name?"

"My name," said the giant, raising himself on one elbow, thereby causing his head to rise so high into the air that Thor thought it was taking flight altogether, "is Skrymner; you, I believe, are the god Thor?"

"I am," answered the god.

"Do you happen to have picked up my glove?" asked the giant carelessly.

Then Thor knew that what he and his companions had taken for a large house was only the giant's glove, and from this we may judge how huge a giant Skrymner must have been.

Thor made no answer, and Skrymner next asked whither Thor was traveling; and when he found that he was journeying to Utgard, offered to bear him company, as he too was going to the same place.

Thor accepted the giant's offer, and after eating a hearty meal, all were ready for another day's march.

Skrymner showed himself a kindly giant, and insisted upon carrying Thor's bag of meal, putting it into his own wallet, which he slung across his broad shoulders.

It must have been a strange sight, indeed, to see the great giant stalking along with his smaller companions at his heels; and we may well marvel how they managed to keep pace with him, or how Thor was able to raise his voice to such a pitch as to reach the giant's ears.

Nevertheless all went well, and they trudged cheerfully along, never flagging in their talk.

Once Skrymner took Raska on his shoulder, but

the height made her so giddy that she was glad to come down again and walk quietly by the side of Thialfe.

When night overtook them they encamped under one of the great oak trees, for they were not yet out of the bounds of the forest. Skrymner, to judge by his loud snoring, fell asleep the moment he lay down upon the ground, but Thor and his comrades were not so tired as to forget that they had tasted nothing since breakfast time. Accordingly they set to work to open the wallet that Skrymner had given into their hands before closing his eyes.

But it was no easy task, and with all their efforts they failed to open it. Not a knot could they untie, and their fingers were chafed and aching.

Neither were they more able to awaken Skrymner, and Thor's anger waxed exceeding fierce. "You shall pay for this," said he, flinging his hammer at the giant.

Skrymner half opened the eye nearest to Thor, and said in a very sleepy voice, "Why will the leaves drop off the trees?" And then he snored as loudly as before.

Thor picked up his hammer, and approaching nearer drove it into the hinder part of the giant's head, who again, half waking up, muttered, "How troublesome the dust is!"

Thor was exceedingly astonished at this, but thought nevertheless that he would once more make trial of his power; so coming up close to Skrymner he struck with such force as to drive the hammer up to the handle in the giant's cheek.

Then Skrymner opened both eyes, and lazily lifting

his finger to his face said, "I suppose there are birds about, for I fancied I felt a feather fall."

Now was Thor fairly disconcerted; and the next morning, when the giant told him that they must now part, as his road led him another way, he was by no means ill-pleased, and he let Skrymner go without so much as bidding him "good speed." Skrymner, however, seemed not to notice that Thor was glad to be quit of his company, and gave him some very friendly advice before he left him.

"If you will take my advice," said the giant, "you will give up this thought of visiting Utgard. The people there are all giants of greater stature even than I, and they make nothing of little men, such as you are. Nay, more, you yourself are likely to fare but badly amongst them, for I see that you are rather apt to think too much of yourself and to take too much upon you. Be wise whilst there is time, think of what I say, and don't go near the city."

"But I will go there," shouted Thor, almost choked with rage; "I will go in spite of all the Jötuns of Jötunheim. None shall hinder me, and the giants shall see and wonder at the mighty power of the god Thor."

And as he spoke the rising sun fell full upon the city of Utgard, whose huge brazen gates glittered in the sunlight. Even though they were so far away, Thor could see how high they were; and as he drew nearer, their vast size filled him with amazement; but when he reached them his wonder was beyond all words, for he and his companions seemed no larger than grasshoppers, in comparison with their height.

The gates were not open, for it was yet early; so Thor and his comrades crept through the bars, and entered the city. As they passed along the streets the houses were so tall that it was only by crossing to the opposite side of the broad road that they were able to see the windows in the topmost stories. And the streets were so wide that it was quite a journey across them.

Once a mouse darted out of a hole, and Raska screamed, for she thought it was a grisly bear. The mouse also shrieked and made much more noise than Raska, as well it might, for a cat so huge that Thialfe half thought it must be the monster of Midgard seized it, and giving it a pat with one of its paws laid it dead on the pavement.

As for the horses, their hoofs were terrible to look at, and Thialfe and Raska must have climbed up ladders if they wished to see their heads.

The people were quite as large as Skrymner had described, and Thor and his companions were obliged to be very careful lest they should get trodden upon, as it was very doubtful if the people even saw them.

Still Thor walked along with the proud consciousness that he was the god Thor; and feeling that though he was so small he was yet a person of some importance, made his way to the palace, and desired to see the king.

After some little time he and his fellow travelers were ushered into the presence of Utgarda Loke, the king of the country. And Utgarda Loke, hearing the door open, raised his eyes, thinking to see some great courtier enter, but he knew nothing of the bows and greetings of Thor, until happening to cast his eyes to the ground,

he saw a little man with his companions saluting him with much ceremony.

The king had never seen such small men before, and there was something so absurd to him in the sight, that he burst out laughing.

And then all the courtiers laughed also, pretending that they had not seen the little creatures before.

It was some time before they all left off laughing, but at length there was a pause, and Thor essayed to make himself heard.

"Though we are but small in comparison with the Jötuns," said he angrily, "we are by no means to be despised, but are gifted with powers that may surprise you."

"Really!" answered Utgarda Loke, raising his eyebrows. And then he and his courtiers laughed louder than before.

At last there was another pause in their merriment, and the king added: "However, we are willing to give the strangers a fair trial in order to prove the truth of what their spokesman, whom I take to be the god Thor, says. How say you? What can this one do?" And he pointed to Loki.

"Please your majesty, I am very great at eating," returned Loki.

"Nay," answered Utgarda Loke, "you must grow a little before you are great at anything."

At which speech the courtiers again shouted with laughter; but Utgarda Loke, turning to his servants, bade them make trial of Loki's powers. So they brought a great trough full of food, and Loki was placed at one

end, and a courtier named Loge at the other. They both fell to work to devour what was before them, and met at the middle of the trough. But it was found that whilst Loki had eaten the flesh of his portion, Loge had eaten, not only the flesh, but the bones also. Therefore Loki was, of course, vanquished.

Then Utgarda Loke turned to Thialfe. "And pray, in what may this youth be specially skilled?" he asked.

"I am a swift skater," answered Thialfe.

"Try him," said the king.

And Thialfe was led to a plain of ice, as smooth as glass, and one named Hugr was set to run against him. But though Thialfe was the swiftest skater ever known in the world, yet Hugr glided past him so fleetly that he had returned to the starting-post before Thialfe had done more than a quarter of the distance.

Three times did Thialfe match his speed against Hugr, and, three times beaten, withdrew from the contest as disconsolate as Loki.

"And now may I ask what you can do yourself?" said the king to Thor.

"I can drain a wine-cup with any one," replied the god.

"Try him," said Utgarda Loke.

And forthwith the royal cupbearer presented a drinking-horn to Thor.

"If you are as great as you pretend to be," said the king, "you will drain it at one draught. Some people take two pulls at it, but the weakest among us can manage it in three."

Thor took up the horn, and, being very thirsty, took

a steady pull at it. He thought he had done very well, but on removing it from his lips he marveled to see how little had gone.

A second time he took a draught, but the horn was far from being emptied.

Again a third time he essayed to drain it, but it was full almost to the brim.

Therefore he set it down in despair, and confessed himself unable to drain it.

"I am disappointed in you," said Utgarda Loke; "you are not half the man I took you for. I see it is no use asking you to do warrior's feats; I must try you in a simpler way, in a child's play that we have amongst us. You shall try to lift my cat from the ground."

Thor turned quite scarlet, and then became white with rage.

"Are you afraid?" asked Utgarda Loke; "you look so pale."

And a large gray cat came leaping along, and planted itself firmly before Thor, showing its sharp claws, and glaring upon him with its fiery eyes.

Thor seized it, but in spite of all his efforts he was only able to raise one of the cat's paws from the ground.

"Pooh! pooh!" exclaimed Utgarda Loke, "you are a mere baby, fit only for the nursery. I believe that my old nurse Hela would be more than a match for you. Here, Hela, come and wrestle with the mighty god Thor."

And Utgarda Loke laughed disdainfully.

Forth stepped a decrepit old woman, with lank cheeks and toothless jaws. Her eyes were sunken, her brow furrowed, and her scanty locks were white as snow.

She advanced towards Thor, and tried to throw him to the ground; but though he put forth his whole strength to withstand her, he was surprised to find how powerful she was, and that it needed all his efforts to keep his feet. For a long time he was successful, but at length she brought him down upon one knee, and Thor was obliged to acknowledge himself conquered.

Ashamed and mortified, he and his companions withdrew to a lodging for the night, and in the morning were making ready to leave the city quietly, when Utgarda Loke sent for them.

He made them a splendid feast, and afterwards went with them beyond the city gates.

"Now tell me honestly," said he to Thor, "what do you think of your success?"

"I am beyond measure astounded and ashamed," replied the god.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Utgarda Loke. "I knew that you were. However, as we are well out of the city I don't mind telling you a secret or two. Doubtless you will receive a little comfort from my doing so, as you confess that your coming hither has been to no purpose.

"In the first place, you have been deceived by enchantments ever since you came within the borders of Jötunheim. I am the giant you met with on your way hither, and if I had known as much of your power then as I do now, you would never have found your way within the walls of Utgard.

"Certainly I had had some slight experience of it, for the three blows you gave me would have killed me had they fallen upon me. But it was not I, but a huge

mountain that you struck at; and if you visit it again, you will find three valleys cleft in the rocks by the strokes of your hammer.

"As for the wallet, I had fastened it with a magic chain, so that you need not wonder that you could not open it.

"Loge, with whom Loki strove, was no courtier, but a subtle devouring flame that consumed all before it —"

Here Loki uttered an exclamation of delight, but Thor bade him be silent, and Utgarda Loke went on:

"Thialfe's enemy was Hugr, or Thought, and let man work away as hard as he pleases, Thought will still outrun him.

"As for yourself, the end of the drinking-horn, though you did not see it, reached the sea, and as fast as you emptied it, it filled again, so that you never could have drained it dry. But the next time that you stand upon the seashore, you will find how much less the ocean is by your draughts.

"The gray cat was no cat, but the great Serpent of Midgard, that twines round the world, and you lifted him so high that we were all quite frightened.

"But your last feat was the most wonderful of all, for Hela was none other than Death. And never did I see any one before over whom Death had so little power.

"And now, my friend, go your way, and don't come near my city again, for I tell you plainly I do not want you there, and I shall use all kinds of enchantment to keep you out of it."

As he ended his speech, Thor raised his hammer, but Utgarda Loke had vanished.

"I will return to the city, and be avenged," said Thor.

But lo! the giant city was nowhere to be seen. A fair pasture-land spread itself out around him, and through its midst a broad river flowed peacefully along.

So Thor and his companions, musing upon their wonderful adventures, turned their steps homeward.

THE QUEST OF THE HAMMER

By Abbie Farwell Brown

ONE morning Thor the Thunderer awoke with a yawn, and stretching out his knotted arm, felt for his precious hammer, which he kept always under his pillow of clouds. But he started up with a roar of rage, so that all the palace trembled. The hammer was gone!

Now this was a very serious matter, for Thor was the protector of Asgard, and Miölnir, the magic hammer which the dwarf had made, was his mighty weapon, of which the enemies of the Æsir stood so much in dread that they dared not venture near. But if they should learn that Miölnir was gone, who could tell what danger might not threaten the palaces of heaven?

Thor darted his flashing eye into every corner of Cloud Land in search of the hammer. He called his fair wife, Sif of the golden hair, to aid in the search, and his two lovely daughters, Thrude and Lora. They hunted and they hunted; they turned Thrudheim upside down, and set the clouds to rolling wonderfully, as they peeped and pried behind and around and under each billowy mass. But Miölnir was not to be found. Certainly, some one had stolen it.

Thor's yellow beard quivered with rage, and his hair bristled on end like the golden rays of a star, while all his household trembled.

"It is Loki again!" he cried. "I am sure Loki is at the bottom of this mischief!" For since the time when Thor had captured Loki for the dwarf Brock and had given him over to have his bragging lips sewed up, Loki had looked at him with evil eyes; and Thor knew that the red rascal hated him most of all the gods.

But this time Thor was mistaken. It was not Loki who had stolen the hammer, — he was too great a coward for that. And though he meant, before the end, to be revenged upon Thor, he was waiting until a safe chance should come, when Thor himself might stumble into danger, and Loki need only to help the evil by a malicious word or two; and this chance came later, as you shall hear in another tale.

Meanwhile Loki was on his best behavior, trying to appear very kind and obliging; so when Thor came rumbling and roaring up to him, demanding, "What have you done with my hammer, you thief?" Loki looked surprised, but did not lose his temper nor answer rudely.

"Have you indeed missed your hammer, brother Thor?" he said, mumbling, for his mouth was still sore where Brock had sewed the stitches. "That is a pity; for if the giants hear of this, they will be coming to try their might against Asgard."

"Hush!" muttered Thor, grasping him by the shoulder with his iron fingers. "That is what I fear. But look you, Loki: I suspect your hand in the mischief. Come, confess."

Then Loki protested that he had nothing to do with so wicked a deed. "But," he added wheedlingly, "I

think I can guess the thief; and because I love you, Thor, I will help you to find him."

"Humph!" growled Thor. "Much love you bear to me! However, you are a wise rascal, the nimblest wit of all the Æsir, and it is better to have you on my side than on the other, when giants are in the game. Tell me, then: who has robbed the Thunder-Lord of his bolt of power?"

Loki drew near and whispered in Thor's ear. "Look, how the storms rage and the winds howl in the world below! Some one is wielding your thunder-hammer all unskillfully. Can you not guess the thief? Who but Thrym, the mighty giant who has ever been your enemy and your imitator, and whose fingers have long itched to grasp the short handle of mighty Miölnir, that the world may name him Thunder-Lord instead of you. But look! What a tempest! The world will be shattered into fragments unless we soon get the hammer back."

Then Thor roared with rage. "I will seek this impudent Thrym!" he cried. "I will crush him into bits, and teach him to meddle with the weapon of the Æsir!"

"Softly, softly," said Loki, smiling maliciously. "He is a shrewd giant, and a mighty. Even you, great Thor, cannot go to him and pluck the hammer from his hand as one would slip the rattle from a baby's pink fist. Nay, you must use craft, Thor; and it is I who will teach you, if you will be patient."

Thor was a brave, blunt fellow, and he hated the ways of Loki, his lies and his deceit. He liked best the way of warriors, — the thundering charge, the flash of weapons, and the heavy blow; but without the ham-

mer he could not fight the giants hand to hand. Loki's advice seemed wise, and he decided to leave the matter to the Red One.

Loki was now all eagerness, for he loved difficulties which would set his wit in play and bring other folk into danger. "Look, now," he said. "We must go to Freia and borrow her falcon dress. But you must ask; for she loves me so little that she would scarce listen to me."

So first they made their way to Folkvang, the house of maidens, where Freia dwelt, the loveliest of all in Asgard. She was fairer than fair, and sweeter than sweet, and the tears from her flower-eyes made the dew which blessed the earth-flowers night and morning. Of her Thor borrowed the magic dress of feathers in which Freia was wont to clothe herself and flit like a great beautiful bird all about the world. She was willing enough to lend it to Thor when he told her that by its aid he hoped to win back the hammer which he had lost; for she well knew the danger threatening herself and all the Æsir until Miölnir should be found.

"Now will I fetch the hammer for you," said Loki. So he put on the falcon plumage, and, spreading his brown wings, flapped away up, up, over the world, down, down, across the great ocean which lies beyond all things that men know. And he came to the dark country where there was no sunshine nor spring, but it was always dreary winter; where mountains were piled up like blocks of ice, and where great caverns yawned hungrily in blackness. And this was Jötunheim, the land of the Frost Giants.

And lo! when Loki came thereto he found Thrym the Giant King sitting outside his palace cave, playing with his dogs and horses. The dogs were as big as elephants, and the horses were as big as houses, but Thrym himself was as huge as a mountain; and Loki trembled, but he tried to seem brave.

"Good-day, Loki," said Thrym, with the terrible voice of which he was so proud, for he fancied it was as loud as Thor's. "How fares it, feathered one, with your little brothers, the Æsir, in Asgard halls? And how dare you venture alone in this guise to Giant Land?"

"It is an ill day in Asgard," sighed Loki, keeping his eye warily upon the giant, "and a stormy one in the world of men. I heard the winds howling and the storms rushing on the earth as I passed by. Some mighty one has stolen the hammer of our Thor. Is it you, Thrym, greatest of all giants, — greater than Thor himself?"

This the crafty one said to flatter Thrym, for Loki well knew the weakness of those who love to be thought greater than they are.

Then Thrym bridled and swelled with pride, and tried to put on the majesty and awe of noble Thor; but he only succeeded in becoming an ugly, puffy monster.

"Well, yes," he admitted. "I have the hammer that belonged to your little Thor; and now how much of a lord is he?"

"Alack!" sighed Loki again, "weak enough he is without his magic weapon. But you, O Thrym, — surely your mightiness needs no such aid. Give me the hammer, that Asgard may no longer be shaken by Thor's grief for his precious toy."

But Thrym was not so easily to be flattered into parting with his stolen treasure. He grinned a dreadful grin, several yards in width, which his teeth barred like jagged boulders across the entrance to a mountain cavern.

"Miölnir the hammer is mine," he said, "and I am Thunder-Lord, mightiest of the mighty. I have hidden it where Thor can never find it, twelve leagues below the sea-caves, where Queen Ran lives with her daughters, the white-capped Waves. But listen, Loki. Go tell the Æsir that I will give back Thor's hammer. I will give it back upon one condition, — that they send Freia the beautiful to be my wife."

"Freia the beautiful!" Loki had to stifle a laugh. Fancy the Æsir giving their fairest flower to such an ugly fellow as this! But he only said politely, "Ah, yes; you demand our Freia in exchange for the little hammer? It is a costly price, great Thrym. But I will be your friend in Asgard. If I have my way, you shall soon see the fairest bride in all the world knocking at your door. Farewell!"

So Loki whizzed back to Asgard on his falcon wings; and as he went he chuckled to think of the evils which were likely to happen because of his words with Thrym. First he gave the message to Thor, — not sparing of Thrym's insolence, to make Thor angry; and then he went to Freia with the word for her, — not sparing of Thrym's ugliness, to make her shudder. The spiteful fellow!

Now you can imagine the horror that was in Asgard as the Æsir listened to Loki's words. "My hammer!"

roared Thor. "The villain confesses that he has stolen my hammer, and boasts that he is Thunder-Lord! Gr-r-r!"

"The ugly giant!" wailed Freia. "Must I be the bride of that hideous old monster, and live in his gloomy mountain prison all my life?"

"Yes; put on your bridal veil, sweet Freia," said Loki maliciously, "and come with me to Jötunheim. Hang your famous starry necklace about your neck, and don your bravest robe; for in eight days there will be a wedding, and Thor's hammer is to pay."

Then Freia fell to weeping. "I cannot go! I will not go!" she cried. "I will not leave the home of gladness and Father Odin's table to dwell in the land of horrors! Thor's hammer is mighty, but mightier the love of the kind Æsir for their little Freia! Good Odin, dear brother Frey, speak for me! You will not make me go?"

The Æsir looked at her and thought how lonely and bare would Asgard be without her loveliness; for she was fairer than fair, and sweeter than sweet.

"She shall not go!" shouted Frey, putting his arms about his sister's neck.

"No, she shall not go!" cried all the Æsir with one voice.

"But my hammer!" insisted Thor. "I must have Miölnir back again."

"And my word to Thrym," said Loki, "that must be made good."

"You are too generous with your words," said Father Odin sternly, for he knew his brother well.

"Your word is not a gem of great price, for you have made it cheap."

Then spoke Heimdal, the sleepless watchman who sits on guard at the entrance to the rainbow bridge which leads to Asgard; and Heimdal was the wisest of the Æsir, for he could see into the future, and knew how things would come to pass. Through his golden teeth he spoke, for his teeth were all of gold.

"I have a plan," he said. "Let us dress Thor himself like a bride in Freia's robes, and send him to Jötunheim to talk with Thrym and to win back his hammer."

But at this word Thor grew very angry. "What! dress me like a girl!" he roared. "I should never hear the last of it! The Æsir will mock me, and call me 'maiden'! The giants, and even the puny dwarfs, will have a lasting jest upon me! I will not go! I will fight! I will die, if need be! But dressed as a woman I will not go!"

But Loki answered him with sharp words, for this was a scheme after his own heart. "What, Thor!" he said. "Would you lose your hammer and keep Asgard in danger for so small a whim? Look, now: if you go not, Thrym with his giants will come in a mighty army and drive us from Asgard; then he will indeed make Freia his bride, and moreover he will have you for his slave under the power of his hammer. How like you this picture, brother of the thunder? Nay, Heimdal's plan is a good one, and I myself will help to carry it out."

Still Thor hesitated; but Freia came and laid her white hand on his arm, and looked up into his scowling face pleadingly.

"To save me, Thor," she begged. And Thor said he would go.

Then there was great sport among the Æsir, while they dressed Thor like a beautiful maiden. Brunhilde and her sisters, the nine Valkyrie, daughters of Odin, had the task in hand. How they laughed as they brushed and curled his yellow hair, and set upon it the wondrous headdress of silk and pearls! They let out seams, and they let down hems, and set on extra pieces, to make it larger, and so they hid his great limbs and knotted arms under Freia's fairest robe of scarlet; but beneath it all he would wear his shirt of mail and his belt of power that gave him double strength. Freia herself twisted about his neck her famous necklace of starry jewels, and Queen Frigg, his mother, hung at his girdle a jingling bunch of keys, such as was the custom for the bride to wear at Norse weddings. Last of all, that Thrym might not see Thor's fierce eyes and the yellow beard, that ill became a maiden, they threw over him a long veil of silver white which covered him to the feet. And there he stood, as stately and tall a bride as even a giant might wish to see; but on his hands he wore his iron gloves, and they ached for but one thing, — to grasp the handle of the stolen hammer.

"Ah, what a lovely maid it is!" chuckled Loki; "and how glad will Thrym be to see this Freia come! Bride Thor, I will go with you as your handmaiden, for I would fain see the fun."

"Come, then," said Thor sulkily, for he was ill pleased, and wore his maiden robes with no good grace. "It is fitting that you go; for I like not these lies and

maskings, and I may spoil the mummery without you at my elbow."

There was loud laughter above the clouds when Thor, all veiled and dainty seeming, drove away from Asgard to his wedding, with maid Loki by his side. Thor cracked his whip and chirruped fiercely to his twin goats with golden hoofs, for he wanted to escape the sounds of mirth that echoed from the rainbow bridge, where all the Æsir stood watching. Loki, sitting with his hands meekly folded like a girl, chuckled as he glanced up at Thor's angry face; but he said nothing, for he knew it was not good to joke too far with Thor, even when Miölnir was hidden twelve leagues below the sea in Ran's kingdom.

So off they dashed to Jötunheim, where Thrym was waiting and longing for his beautiful bride. Thor's goats thundered along above the sea and land and people far below, who looked up wondering as the noise rolled overhead. "Hear how the thunder rumbles!" they said. "Thor is on a long journey to-night." And a long journey it was, as the tired goats found before they reached the end.

Thrym heard the sound of their approach, for his ear was eager. "Hola!" he cried. "Some one is coming from Asgard, — only one of Odin's children could make a din so fearful. Hasten, men, and see if they are bringing Freia to be my wife."

Then the lookout giant stepped down from the top of his mountain, and said that a chariot was bringing two maidens to the door.

"Run, giants, run!" shouted Thrym, in a fever at

this news. "My bride is coming! Put silken cushions on the benches for a great banquet, and make the house beautiful for the fairest maid in all space! Bring in all my golden-horned cows and my coal-black oxen, that she may see how rich I am, and heap all my gold and jewels about to dazzle her sweet eyes! She shall find me richest of the rich; and when I have her,— fairest of the fair,— there will be no treasure that I lack,— not one!"

The chariot stopped at the gate, and out stepped the tall bride, hidden from head to foot, and her hand-maiden muffled to the chin. "How afraid of catching cold they must be!" whispered the giant ladies, who were peering over one another's shoulders to catch a glimpse of the bride, just as the crowd outside the awning does at a wedding nowadays.

Thrym had sent six splendid servants to escort the maidens: these were the Metal Kings, who served him as lord of them all. There was the Gold King, all in cloth of gold, with fringes of yellow bullion, most glittering to see; and there was the Silver King, almost as gorgeous in a suit of spangled white; and side by side bowed the dark Kings of Iron and Lead, the one mighty in black, the other sullen in blue; and after them were the Copper King, gleaming ruddy and brave, and the Tin King, strutting in his trimmings of gaudy tinsel which looked nearly as well as silver but were more economical. And this fine troop of lackey kings most politely led Thor and Loki into the palace, and gave them of the best, for they never suspected who these seeming maidens really were.

And when evening came there was a wonderful banquet to celebrate the wedding. On a golden throne sat Thrym, uglier than ever in his finery of purple and gold. Beside him was the bride, of whose face no one had yet caught even a glimpse; and at Thrym's other hand stood Loki, the waiting-maid, for he wanted to be near to mend the mistakes which Thor might make.

Now the dishes at the feast were served in a huge way, as befitted the table of giants: great beeves roasted whole, on platters as wide across as a ship's deck; plum puddings as fat as feather-beds, with plums as big as footballs; and a wedding cake like a snow-capped haymow. The giants ate enormously. But to Thor, because they thought him a dainty maiden, they served small bits of everything on a tiny gold dish. Now Thor's long journey had made him very hungry, and through his veil he whispered to Loki, "I shall starve, Loki! I cannot fare on these nibbles. I must eat a goodly meal as I do at home." And forthwith he helped himself to such morsels as might satisfy his hunger for a little time. You should have seen the giants stare at the meal which the dainty bride devoured!

For first under the silver veil disappeared by pieces a whole roast ox. Then Thor made eight mouthfuls of eight pink salmon, a dish of which he was very fond. And next he looked about and reached for a platter of cakes and sweetmeats that was set aside at one end of the table for the lady guests, and the bride ate them all. You can fancy how the damsels drew down their mouths and looked at one another when they saw their dessert disappear; and they whispered about the table,

"Alack! if our future mistress is to sup like this day by day, there will be poor cheer for the rest of us!" And to crown it all, Thor was thirsty, as well he might be; and one after another he raised to his lips and emptied three great barrels of mead, the foamy drink of the giants. Then indeed Thrym was amazed, for Thor's giant appetite had beaten that of the giants themselves.

"Never before saw I a bride so hungry," he cried, "and never before one half so thirsty!"

But Loki, the waiting-maid, whispered to him softly, "The truth is, great Thrym, that my dear mistress was almost starved. For eight days Freia has eaten nothing at all, so eager was she for Jötunheim."

Then Thrym was delighted, you may be sure. He forgave his hungry bride, and loved her with all his heart. He leaned forward to give her a kiss, raising a corner of her veil; but his hand dropped suddenly, and he started up in terror, for he had caught the angry flash of Thor's eye, which was glaring at him through the bridal veil. Thor was longing for his hammer.

"Why has Freia so sharp a look?" Thrym cried. "It pierces like lightning and burns like fire."

But again the sly waiting-maid whispered timidly, "O Thrym, be not amazed! The truth is, my poor mistress's eyes are red with wakefulness and bright with longing. For eight nights Freia has not known a wink of sleep, so eager was she for Jötunheim."

Then again Thrym was doubly delighted, and he longed to call her his very own dear wife. "Bring in the wedding gift!" he cried. "Bring in Thor's hammer, Miölnir, and give it to Freia, as I promised; for

when I have kept my word she will be mine, — all mine!"

Then Thor's big heart laughed under his woman's dress, and his fierce eyes swept eagerly down the hall to meet the servant who was bringing in the hammer on a velvet cushion. Thor's fingers could hardly wait to clutch the stubby handle which they knew so well; but he sat quite still on the throne beside ugly old Thrym, with his hands meekly folded and his head bowed like a bashful bride.

The giant servant drew nearer, nearer, puffing and blowing, strong though he was, beneath the mighty weight. He was about to lay it at Thor's feet (for he thought it so heavy that no maiden could lift it or hold it in her lap), when suddenly Thor's heart swelled, and he gave a most unmaidenly shout of rage and triumph. With one swoop he grasped the hammer in his iron fingers; with the other arm he tore off the veil that hid his terrible face, and trampled it under foot; then he turned to the frightened king, who cowered beside him on the throne.

"Thief!" he cried. "Freia sends you *this* as a wedding gift!" And he whirled the hammer about his head, then hurled it once, twice, thrice, as it rebounded to his hand; and in the first stroke, as of lightning, Thrym rolled dead from his throne; in the second stroke perished the whole giant household, — these ugly enemies of the Æsir; and in the third stroke the palace itself tumbled together and fell to the ground like a toppling play-house of blocks.

But Loki and Thor stood safe among the ruins,

dressed in their tattered maiden robes, a quaint and curious sight; and Loki, full of mischief now as ever, burst out laughing.

"Oh, Thor! if you could see —" he began; but Thor held up his hammer and shook it gently as he said, —

"Look now, Loki: it was an excellent joke, and so far you have done well, — after your crafty fashion, which likes me not. But now I have my hammer again, and the joke is done. From you, nor from another, I brook no laughter at my expense. Henceforth we will have no mention of this masquerade, nor of these rags, which now I throw away. Do you hear, red laugher?"

And Loki heard, with a look of hate, and stifled his laughter as best he could; for it is not good to laugh at him who holds the hammer.

Not once after that was there mention in Asgard of the time when Thor dressed him as a girl and won his bridal gift from Thrym the giant.

But Miölnir was safe once more in Asgard, and you and I know how it came there; so some one must have told. I wonder if red Loki whispered the tale to some outsider, after all? Perhaps it may be so, for now he knew how best to make Thor angry; and from that day when Thor forbade his laughing, Loki hated him with the mean little hatred of a mean little soul.

HOW THE WOLF FENRIS WAS CHAINED

By Julia Goddard

IN the times when Odin and Thor ruled in Asgard there were giants and monsters of all sorts, and some of the evil gods had monsters for children.

So it was with Loki, who had married Signe, the daughter of one of the Jötuns, or giants. Two of his children were Jormungand, the great serpent, and the wolf Fenris; the third was a daughter, named Hela, who, though she was not a monster, was nevertheless very terrible to look upon. They were all born in Jötunheim, where they lived for some time before the Asi heard anything about them.

When at length the tidings that they lived reached the ears of Odin, he felt very uneasy, as did the Asi generally, for they called to mind certain old prophecies, which said that these monsters should arise, and in due time bring great evils upon gods and men. Nay, it was even said that the wolf Fenris should devour Odin himself. Well, therefore, might Odin wish that something should at once be done to curb the growing power of Loki's offspring. At the same time he feared to offend Loki, who was his foster-brother. He had never forgotten the days of their childhood, and would never hold a feast unless Loki were present

However, he called together a council of the Asi, and at length it was agreed that the three children should be brought from Jötunheim to some place where they might be more within his power.

If Odin could have slain them at once, he would doubtless have been well pleased to do so; but this was not in his power. He was only able to command them, and they were bound to obey him as the greatest of the gods.

So the summons went forth, and on a given day Loki, with Hela, Fenris, and Jormungand, arrived at the palace, where Odin awaited them, seated upon his throne and surrounded by the Asi in their glittering array.

Loki certainly was not dazzled by the splendor of the gods; he was used to such displays among them. Neither did it seem in any way to move his offspring, who drew near to the steps of the throne without looking either to the right or to the left.

Hela was a little in front. Her face was grim and fierce; half her body was black, half flesh-color. So terrible was she to look at, that a shudder ran through the whole assembly as they gazed upon her awful form.

"It is clear that she belongs not to us," said one of the Asi.

And Hela at the words half drew the knife out of her belt, as though she would strike at the speaker.

But Odin said, "Nay, over the Asi thou shalt have no power. In Midgard, where men dwell, shalt thou be feared, and thy rule shall be over those of human race. Sorrowfully shall they own thee as a sovereign, from whose commands there is no appeal. Over them

shalt thou be queen, and the greatest of kings shall stand in awe of thee. Go forth, and from the kingdom I will give thee send forth thy decrees to the children of men."

Then Odin gave Hela a dreary kingdom in Niflheim, the world of mist that is older than heaven and earth; and there she had charge over nine worlds, and had a spacious palace with many halls, but all of them were dark and gloomy.

"The dish that thou shalt eat of shall be hunger," continued Odin; "thy bed shall be the bed of sickness, and its hangings splendid woe. Only the dead shall people thy kingdom, and the light of day shall be shut out from it forever."

And Hela, having heard her sentence, turned away with a stony countenance. It mattered little to her where she reigned, so long as she could smite and slay.

Then Jormungand drew near. The slimy monster wound and twisted his huge body towards the throne, and a dull lustre shimmered round his heavy scales. The gods shrank back, for malice flashed from his cruel eyes, and the sound of his hissing was fearful to hear.

But Odin bade him be silent, and the great serpent lowered his head and crouched at the king's feet.

And lo, the palace walls suddenly opened, and over the fair gardens of Asgard came a deep, low murmur, and then a mist appeared in the distance, which, as the Asi gazed, shaped itself into the likeness of a troubled sea. Louder yet grew the murmur, until it changed into a deep roar, and the gods all wondered what was coming to pass, for it seemed as though the great ocean that surrounds all lands were rushing onward and would

overwhelm the palace. The waves reared their crest higher and higher, and nearer and nearer rolled the waters.

"It is a miracle!" exclaimed the Asi.

But Odin rose and seized the huge serpent and flung him into the advancing tide.

One heavy plunge, one blinding sheet of mist that hid the sunlight and the bright blue sky, one hideous cry, and then a sudden hush, — and as the white mist cleared away, behold the waters had vanished, and naught was to be seen but the fair land of Asgard.

The ocean had seized its prey, and in its depths the serpent was to grow and grow until at length he should stretch all round the world, and lie there harmless, with his tail in his mouth, until the day of Ragnaröck should dawn.

Then only Fenris was left to receive the sentence of Odin.

The palace walls had closed again, and the king of heaven bid the giant-wolf draw near.

Never had the Asi seen so huge a beast of the kind; he was, moreover, sleek and well shaped, but his look was full of craft and cunning, and he came stealthily along as though he would beg a milder fate than had befallen his brother Jormungand.

The gods pressed forward to gain a better view of the well-formed animal, and praised his shining coat and lithe limbs. What would be his doom? And they waited anxiously to hear what Odin would say.

"What say you to our looking after Fenris ourselves?" asked the king.

Then several of the gods stepped forward, and stroked his sleek sides, and patted his comely head, and the wolf seemed so tame that Odin thought that now at least there was nothing to be feared from him. And in the end it was agreed that Fenris should be brought up among the Asi.

So Fenris was lodged in Asgard; and whilst he was quite young all went on well, though sometimes he showed signs of such fierceness that none but Tyr, who was a son of Odin, and one of the boldest and most stout-hearted among the gods, dared to feed him.

As he grew older his strength increased so greatly that the gods began to fear that in the end he might prove too much for them. They also called to mind the sayings concerning the evil that he was to bring upon them, and they pondered whether they should not bind him fast before he became any stronger.

Now Fenris, although he knew not what the gods were thinking of, began to fear something when he saw that they never came to him singly, but always many together, and were, moreover, well armed, and more than once brought chains with them, as if they would use them if they might be able to do so. He resolved, therefore, to keep watch.

"If they want to bind me," said he to himself, "they must find stronger chains than any that have been forged in Asgard." Still he pretended not to see what they were doing.

"I wonder if you are as strong as I am," said Thor to the wolf. "See, I can break this chain asunder easily. If you were bound with it, could you do the same?"

"Try me," answered Fenris, who saw at a glance that the chain was not too strong for him. And he allowed it to be wound round and round his body, and fastened to a great iron staple that ran many feet into the earth. Then he shook himself three times, and the third time the fetters fell to the ground, and he was free.

"I can break a stronger chain than that," said Fenris.

And the gods went away, and made another chain, heavier and thicker than the last, and called it Dromi.

Then again they came to Fenris, and asked him if he were willing to try his strength once more.

Fenris eyed the chain narrowly, but feeling that he had strength enough to break it, suffered himself again to be bound; and, as before, he broke the chain in pieces, and the splinters flew far and near. And the gods were filled with dismay, for Fenris was already beyond their power to bind. What were they to do?

Bragi, the eloquent god, stepped forward, and in a long speech, in which he taught them that iron and base metal could not overcome such strength as that of Fenris, he told them that from more subtle elements a magic cord might be woven that would resist the wolf's most vigorous efforts.

"But where may we get such a cord?" asked Tyr. "We have forged to the best of our power, and are unable to make a chain that can hold the monster."

"The gods are not blacksmiths," returned Bragi; "send to those who are. The dwarfs of Black-Elfland understand the secrets of the craft better than we do."

Now the region of Black-Elfland, where the dwarfs and dark elves dwell, is deep below the earth. There they work in metals, and are skillful in all smith's work.

So Ull, the god who runs swiftly on snowshoes, was sent to see what the dwarfs could do. And when the dwarfs had heard his story, they told him that they could make a cord so strong that not even the Asi themselves could break it, and yet to outward seeming so slender that Fenris would not be afraid of trying it. It was to be wrought of six things, the sound of a cat's footsteps, the roots of a mountain, and a fish's breath being amongst them.

And the dwarfs set to work, and twined and twisted the materials so deftly, that none could see the joining, or guess of what woof they were woven. And when the cord was finished, they gave it to Ull, who quickly departed with it for Asgard.

The gods were a little disappointed when they saw so slender a bond, which looked as if it might be easily snapped; but when they had tried their utmost strength upon it, they found that even Thor could do no more than strain it slightly. And in very good spirits, they went to Fenris, and took him with them to the island of Syngvi, in the lake Amsvartnir.

There they feasted, and made merry, and at last began to try feats of strength. One after another broke mighty bars of iron, and rent huge chains in pieces, or hurled stones of prodigious weight.

Fenris followed their example. One crunch of his jaws shivered the strongest iron, and a stroke of his paw sundered the heaviest chains. And when the gods

thought he must be somewhat tired, they showed him the rope.

"It is so late in the day," said Bragi, "that we will give you no hard task. We have kept the most slender cord until the last. You shall have the first try at it."

Certainly the cord was very fragile to look at; but Fenris was wary, he suspected treachery, and at first refused to be bound with it. But the gods laughed at his fears and said that he was becoming a coward.

"No coward am I," replied Fenris, "but I fear that ye are playing me false. Let Tyr put his hand into my mouth as a pledge of your good faith, then will I submit to be bound."

So Tyr put his hand into Fenris's mouth, and the gods wound the rope Gleipner round and round the wolf's body, and fastened his legs in such a manner that if the rope were as strong as the dwarfs had promised, there would be no doubt of his being their prisoner.

Fenris lay quite still whilst the rope was being tied, for he had Tyr in his power, and he trusted to that in case there should be any treachery.

Tyr, finding that Fenris was fast bound, attempted gently to withdraw his hand; but the wolf kept a firm hold, nor did he loose it even in the midst of his struggles to break the rope.

The Asi gave a shout. "Long live the dwarfs of the Black Elfland! Their work is to be trusted."

And again Fenris strove with all his might to free himself from his bonds, but in vain, and he lay on the ground panting and well-nigh exhausted with his efforts. Tyr's hand was still between his teeth, and he

glared savagely as much as to say, "We are captives together."

Then Tyr began to try what force might do, and with the hand that was free he sought to open the wolf's jaws so as to free the other. He had half succeeded when Fenris, in fear lest he might lose it, made a sudden snap and bit it off, and Tyr stood clear of the wolf, but with only one hand.

Fenris was captive now.

And the Asi raised a shout of joy.

Tyr, however, was silent, sorrowing over his loss, and yet, perhaps, he felt that it was well to get rid of the monster even at such a cost.

Then the Asi bound Fenris to a huge rock, and to fasten him the better they drove a sword through his jaws and pinned him fast.

He howled dreadfully, and foam issued from his nostrils. And there he must lie until the day of Ragnaröck, when he, as well as Jormungand, shall once more be free. Then terrible things shall come to pass. But the gods hope that that day is far off, for when it comes they must die.

Three winters without a summer shall go before it, and on the plains of Vigrid, a hundred miles square, a fearful battle shall be fought in which all shall perish.

The gods, the giants, the living, and the dead shall all be present at it. The heroes who are dwelling in Odin's halls shall issue forth when they hear the gold-combed cock. The dead who inhabit Hela's dreary dwellings shall come forth when the red cock crows in hell. Jormungand the serpent and Fenris will be un-

loosed, and Odin and Thor meet their death as it had been foretold.

The gods care not to think of Ragnaröck. Though it must come, they put all thoughts of it away; and perchance they look beyond to the new earth that is promised them, when the world in which they now dwell shall have been destroyed, and to the time when the gods shall wake up after their death-sleep and live forever in joy and gladness.

THE DWARF'S GIFTS

By Abbie Farwell Brown

RED Loki had been up to mischief again! Loki, who made quarrels and brought trouble wherever he went. He had a wicked heart, and he loved no one. He envied Father Odin his wisdom and his throne above the world. He envied Balder his beauty, and Tyr his courage, and Thor his strength. He envied all the good Æsir, who were happy; but he would not take the trouble to be good himself. So he was always unhappy, spiteful, and sour. And if anything went wrong in Asgard, the kingdom of the gods, one was almost sure to find Loki at the bottom of the trouble.

Now Thor, the strongest of all the gods, was very proud of his wife's beautiful hair, which fell in golden waves to her feet, and covered her like a veil. He loved it better than anything, except Sif herself. One day, while Thor was away from home, Loki stole into Thrudheim, the realm of clouds, and cut off all Sif's golden hair, till her head was as round and fuzzy as a yellow dandelion. Fancy how angry Thor was when he came rattling home that night in his thunder-chariot and found Sif so ugly to look at! He stamped up and down till the five hundred and forty floors of his cloud palace shook like an earthquake, and lightning flashed from his blue eyes. The people down in the world below

cried, "Dear, dear! What a terrible thunderstorm! Thor must be very angry about something. Loki has been up to mischief, it is likely." You see, they also knew Loki and his tricks.

At last Thor calmed himself a little. "Sif, my love," he said, "you shall be beautiful again. Red Loki shall make you so, since his was the unmaking. The villain! He shall pay for this!"

Then, without more ado, off set Thor to find red Loki. He went in his thunder-chariot, drawn by two goats, and the clouds rumbled and the lightning flashed wherever he went; for Thor was the mighty god of thunder. At last he came upon the sly rascal, who was trying to hide. Big Thor seized him by the throat.

"You scoundrel!" he cried, "I will break every bone in your body if you do not put back Sif's beautiful hair upon her head."

"Ow—ow! You hurt me!" howled Loki. "Take off your big hand, Thor. What is done, is done. I cannot put back Sif's hair. You know that very well."

"Then you must get her another head of hair," growled Thor. "That you can do. You must find for her hair of real gold, and it must grow upon her head as if it were her own. Do this, or you shall die."

"Where shall I get this famous hair?" whined Loki, though he knew well enough.

"Get it of the black elves," said Thor; "they are cunning jewelers, and they are your friends. Go, Loki, and go quickly, for I long to see Sif as beautiful as ever."

Then Loki of the burning beard slunk away to the hills, where, far under ground, the dwarfs have their

furnaces and their workshops. Among great heaps of gold and silver and shining jewels, which they have dug up out of the earth, the little crooked men in brown blink and chatter and scold one another; for they are ugly fellows — the dwarfs. *Tink-tank! tink-tank!* go their little hammers all day long and all night long, while they make wonderful things such as no man has ever seen, though you shall hear about them.

They had no trouble to make a head of hair for Sif. It was for them a simple matter, indeed. The dwarfs work fast for such a customer as Loki, and in a little while the golden wires were beaten out, and drawn out, made smooth and soft and curly, and braided into a thick golden braid. But when Loki came away, he carried with him also two other treasures which the clever dwarfs had made. One was a golden spear, and the other was a ship.

Now these do not sound so very wonderful. But wait until you hear! The spear, which was named Gungnir, was bewitched, so that it made no difference if the person who held it was clumsy and careless. For it had this amazing quality, that no matter how badly it was aimed, or how unskillfully it was thrown, it was sure to go straight to the mark — which is a very obliging and convenient thing in one's weapon, as you will readily see.

And Skidbladnir — this was the harsh name of the ship — was even more wonderful. It could be taken to pieces and folded up so small that it would go into one's pocket. But when it was unfolded and put together, it would hold all the gods of Asgard for a sea

journey. Besides all this, when the sails were set, the ship was sure always to have a fair wind, which would make it skim along like a great bird, which was the best part of the charm, as any sailor will tell you.

Now Loki felt very proud of these three treasures, and left the hill cave stretching his neck and strutting like a great red turkey cock. Outside the gate, however, he met Brock, the black dwarf, who was the brother of Sindri, the best workman in all the underworld.

"Hello! what have you there?" asked Brock of the big head, pointing at the bundles which Loki was carrying.

"The three finest gifts in the world," boasted Loki, hugging his treasures tight.

"Pooh!" said Brock, "I don't believe it. Did my brother Sindri make them?"

"No," answered Loki; "they were made by the black elves, the sons of Ivaldi. And they are the most precious gifts that ever were seen."

"Pooh!" again puffed Brock, wagging his long beard crossly. "Nonsense! Whatever they be, my brother Sindri can make three other gifts more precious; that I know."

"Can he, though?" laughed Loki. "I will give him my head if he can."

"Done!" shouted the dwarf. "Let me see your famous gifts." So Loki showed him the three wonders: the gold hair for Sif, the spear, and the ship. But again the dwarf said, "Pooh! These are nothing. I will show you what the master-smith can do, and you shall lose your bragging red head, my Loki."

Now Loki began to be a little uneasy. He followed Brock back to the smithy in the mountain, where they found Sindri at his forge. Oh, yes! He could beat the poor gifts of which Loki was so proud. But he would not tell what his own three gifts were to be.

First Sindri took a pig's skin and laid it on the fire. Then he went away for a little time; but he set Brock at the bellows and bade him blow — blow — blow the fire until Sindri should return. Now when Sindri was gone, Loki also stole away; for, as usual, he was up to mischief. He had the power of changing his shape and of becoming any creature he chose, which was often very convenient. Thus he turned himself into a huge biting fly. Then he flew back into the smithy where Brock was blow — blow — blowing. Loki buzzed about the dwarf's head, and finally lighted on his hand and stung him, hoping to make him let go the bellows. But no! Brock only cried out, "Oh-ee!" and kept on blowing for dear life. Now soon back came Sindri to the forge and took the pigskin from the fire. Wonder of wonders! It had turned into a hog with golden bristles; a live hog that shone like the sun. Brock was not satisfied, however.

"Well! I don't think much of that," he grumbled.

"Wait a little," said Sindri mysteriously. "Wait and see." Then he went on to make the second gift.

This time he put a lump of gold into the fire. And when he went away, as before, he bade Brock stand at the bellows to blow — blow — blow without stopping. Again, as before, in buzzed Loki the gadfly as soon as the master-smith had gone out. This time he settled

on Brock's swarthy neck, and stung him so sorely that the blood came and the dwarf roared till the mountain trembled. Still Brock did not let go the handle of the bellows, but blew and howled — blew and howled with pain till Sindri returned. And this time the dwarf took from the fire a fine gold ring, round as roundness.

"Um! I don't think so much of that," said Brock, again disappointed, for he had expected some wonderful jewel. But Sindri wagged his head wisely.

"Wait a little," he said. "We shall see what we shall see." He heaved a great lump of iron into the fire to make the third gift. But this time when he went away, leaving Brock at the bellows, he charged him to blow — blow — blow without a minute's rest, or everything would be spoiled. For this was to be the best gift of all.

Brock planted himself wide-legged at the forge and blew — blew — blew. But for the third time Loki, winged as a fly, came buzzing into the smithy. This time he fastened viciously below Brock's bushy eyebrow, and stung him so cruelly that the blood trickled down, a red river, into his eyes, and the poor dwarf was blinded. With a howl Brock raised his hand to wipe away the blood, and of course in that minute the bellows stood still. Then Loki buzzed away with a sound that seemed like a mocking laugh. At the same moment in rushed Sindri, panting with fright, for he had heard that sound and guessed what it meant.

"What have you done?" he cried. "You have let the bellows rest! You have spoiled everything!"

"Only a little moment, but one little moment,"

pleaded Brock, in a panic. "It has done no harm, has it?"

Sindri leaned anxiously over the fire, and out of the flames he drew the third gift — an enormous hammer.

"Oh!" said Brock, much disappointed, "only an old iron hammer! I don't think anything of *that*. Look how short the handle is, too."

"That is your fault, brother," returned the smith crossly. "If you had not let the bellows stand still, the handle would have been long enough. Yet as it is — we shall see, we shall see. I think it will at least win for you red Loki's head. Take the three gifts, brother, such as they are, and bear them to Asgard. Let all the gods be judges between you and Loki, which gifts are best, his or yours. But stay — I may as well tell you the secrets of your three treasures, or you will not know how to make them work. Your toy that is not wound up is of no use at all." Which is very true, as we all know. Then he bent over and whispered in Brock's ear. And what he said pleased Brock so much that he jumped straight up into the air and capered like one of Thor's goats.

"What a clever brother you are, to be sure!" he cried.

At that moment Loki, who had ceased to be a gadfly, came in grinning, with his three gifts. "Well, are you ready?" he asked. Then he caught sight of the three gifts which Brock was putting into his sack.

"Ho! A pig, a ring, and a stub-handled hammer!" he shouted. "Is that all you have? Fine gifts, indeed! I was really growing uneasy, but now I see that my head is safe. Let us start for Asgard immediately, where

I promise you that I with my three treasures shall be thrice more welcome than you with your stupid pig, your ugly ring, and your half-made hammer."

So together they climbed to Asgard, and there they found the Æsir sitting in the great judgment hall on Ida Plain. There was Father Odin on his high throne, with his two ravens at his head and his two wolves at his feet. There was Queen Frigg by his side; and about them were Balder the beautiful, Frey and Freia, the fair brother and sister; the mighty Thor, with Sif, his crop-haired wife, and all the rest of the great Æsir who lived in the upper world above the homes of men.

"Brother Æsir," said Loki, bowing politely, for he was a smooth rascal, "we have come each with three gifts, the dwarf and I; and you shall judge which be the most worthy of praise. But if I lose, — I, your brother, — I lose my head to this crooked little dwarf." So he spoke, hoping to put the Æsir on his side from the first. For his head was a very handsome one, and the dwarf was indeed an ill-looking fellow. The gods, however, nodded gravely, and bade the two show what their gifts might be.

Then Loki stepped forward to the foot of Odin's throne. And first he pulled from his great wallet the spear Gungnir, which could not miss aim. This he gave to Odin, the all-wise. And Odin was vastly pleased, as you may imagine, to find himself thenceforth an unequaled marksman. So he smiled upon Loki kindly and said: "Well done, brother."

Next Loki took out the promised hair for Sif, which he handed Thor with a grimace. Now when the golden

THE THIRD GIFT — AN ENORMOUS HAMMER

locks were set upon her head, they grew there like real hair, long and soft and curling — but still real gold. So that Sif was more beautiful than ever before, and more precious, too. You can fancy how pleased Thor was with Loki's gift. He kissed lovely Sif before all the gods and goddesses, and vowed that he forgave Loki for the mischief which he had done in the first place, since he had so nobly made reparation.

Then Loki took out the third gift, all folded up like a paper boat; and it was the ship Skidbladnir, — I am sorry they did not give it a prettier name. This he presented to Frey the peaceful. And you can guess whether or not Frey's blue eyes laughed with pleasure at such a gift.

Now when Loki stepped back, all the Æsir clapped their hands and vowed that he had done wondrous well.

"You will have to show us fine things, you dwarf," quoth Father Odin, "to better the gifts of red Loki. Come, what have you in the sack you bear upon your shoulders?"

Then the crooked little Brock hobbled forward, bent almost double under the great load which he carried. "I have what I have," he said.

First, out he pulled the ring Draupnir, round as roundness and shining of gold. This the dwarf gave to Odin, and though it seemed but little, yet it was much. For every ninth night out of this ring, he said, would drop eight other rings of gold, as large and as fair. Then Odin clapped his hands and cried: "Oh, wondrous gift! I like it even better than the magic spear which Loki gave." And all the other Æsir agreed with him.

Then out of the sack came grunting Goldbristle, the hog, all of gold. Brock gave him to Frey, to match the magic ship of Loki. This Goldbristle was so marvelously forged that he could run more swiftly than any horse, on air or water. Moreover, he was a living lantern. For on the darkest night he bristled with light like a million-pointed star, so that one riding on his back would light the air and the sea like a firefly, wherever he went. This idea pleased Frey mightily, for he was the merriest of the gods, and he laughed aloud.

"'T is a wondrous fine gift," he said. "I like old Goldbristle even better than the compressible boat. For on this lusty steed I can ride about the world when I am tending the crops and the cattle of men and scattering the rain upon them. Master dwarf, I give my vote to you." And all the other Æsir agreed with him.

Then out of the sack Brock drew the third gift. It was the short-handled hammer named Miölnir. And this was the gift which Sindri had made for Thor, the mightiest of the gods; and it was the best gift of all. For with it Thor could burst the hardest metal and shatter the thickest mountain, and nothing could withstand its power. But it never could hurt Thor himself; and no matter how far or how hard it was thrown, it would always fly back into Thor's own hand. Last of all, whenever he so wished, the great hammer would become so small that he could put it in his pocket, quite out of sight. But Brock was sorry that the handle was so short — all owing to his fault, because he had let the bellows rest for that one moment.

When Thor had this gift in his hand, he jumped up

with a shout of joy. "'T is a wondrous fine gift," he cried, "with short handle or with long. And I prize it even more than I prize the golden hair of Sif which Loki gave. For with it I shall fight our enemies, the Frost Giants and the mischievous Trolls and the other monsters — Loki's friends. And all the Æsir will be glad of my gift when they see what deeds I shall do therewith. Now, if I may have my say, I judge that the three gifts made by Sindri the dwarf are the most precious that may be. So Brock has gained the prize of Loki's red head, — a sorry recompense indeed for gifts so masterly." Then Thor sat down. And all the other Æsir shouted that he had spoken well, and that they agreed with him.

So Loki was like to lose his head. He offered to pay instead a huge price, if Brock would let him go. But Brock refused. "The red head of Loki for my gift," he insisted, and the gods nodded that it must be so, since he had earned his wish.

But when Loki saw that the count was all against him, his eyes grew crafty. "Well, take me, then — if you can!" he shouted. And off he shot like an arrow from a bow. For Loki had on magic shoes, with which he could run over sea or land or sky; and the dwarf could never catch him in the world. Then Brock was furious. He stood stamping and chattering, tearing his long beard with rage,

"I am cheated!" he cried. "I have won — but I have lost." Then he turned to Thor, who was playing with his hammer, bursting a mountain or two and splitting a tree here and there. "Mighty Thor," begged

the dwarf, "catch me the fellow who has broken his word. I have given you the best gift, — your wonderful hammer. Catch me, then, the boasting red head which I have fairly bought."

Then Thor stopped his game and set out in pursuit of Loki, for he was ever on the side of fairness. No one, however fleet, can escape when Thor follows, for his is the swiftness of a lightning flash. So he soon brought Loki back to Ida Plain, and gave him up a prisoner to the dwarf.

"I have you now, boaster," said Brock fiercely, "and I will cut off your red head in the twinkling of an eye." But just as he was about to do as he said, Loki had another sly idea.

"Hold, sirrah dwarf," he said. "It is true that you have won my head, but not the neck, not an inch of the neck." And all the gods agreed that this was so. Then Brock was puzzled indeed, for how could he cut off Loki's head without taking an inch of the neck, too? But this he must not do, or he knew the just Æsir would punish him with death. So he was forced to be content with stopping Loki's boasting in another way. He would sew up the bragging lips.

He brought a stout, strong thread and an awl to bore the holes. And in a twinkling he had stitched up the lips of the sly one, firm and fast. So for a time, at least, he put an end to Loki's boasting and his taunts and lies.

It is a pity that those mischief-making lips were not fastened up forever, for that would have saved much of the trouble and sorrow which came after. But at last, after a long time, Loki got his lips free, and they

made great sorrow in Asgard for the gods, and on earth for men.

Now this is the end of the tale which tells of the dwarf's gifts, and especially of Thor's hammer, which was afterwards to be of such service to him and such bane to the enemies of the Æsir.

BALDER AND THE MISTLETOE

By Abbie Farwell Brown

LOKI had given up trying to revenge himself upon Thor. The Thunder Lord seemed proof against his tricks. And indeed nowadays Loki hated him no more than he did the other gods. He hated some because they always frowned at him; he hated others because they only laughed and jeered. Some he hated for their distrust and some for their fear. But he hated them all because they were happy and good and mighty, while he was wretched, bad, and of little might. Yet it was all his own fault that this was so. He might have been an equal with the best of them, if he had not chosen to set himself against everything that was good. He had made them all his enemies, and the more he did to injure them, the more he hated them, — which is always the way with evil-doers. Loki longed to see them all unhappy. He slunk about in Asgard with a glum face and wrinkled forehead. He dared not meet the eyes of any one, lest they should read his heart. For he was plotting evil, the greatest of evils, which should bring sorrow to all his enemies at once and turn Asgard into a land of mourning. The Æsir did not guess the whole truth, yet they felt the bitterness of the thoughts which Loki bore; and whenever in the dark he passed unseen, the gods shuddered as if a breath

of evil had blown upon them, and even the flowers drooped before his steps.

Now at this time Balder the beautiful had a strange dream. He dreamed that a cloud came before the sun, and all Asgard was dark. He waited for the cloud to drift away, and for the sun to smile again. But no; the sun was gone forever, he thought; and Balder awoke feeling very sad. The next night Balder had another dream. This time he dreamed that it was still dark as before; the flowers were withered and the gods were growing old; even Idun's magic apples could not make them young again. And all were weeping and wringing their hands as though some dreadful thing had happened. Balder awoke feeling strangely frightened, yet he said no word to Nanna his wife, for he did not want to trouble her.

When it came night again Balder slept and dreamed a third dream, a still more terrible one than the other two had been. He thought that in the dark, lonely world there was nothing but a sad voice, which cried, "The sun is gone! The spring is gone! Joy is gone! For Balder the beautiful is dead, dead, dead!"

This time Balder awoke with a cry, and Nanna asked him what was the matter. So he had to tell her of his dream, and she was sadly frightened; for in those days dreams were often sent to folk as messages, and what the gods dreamed usually came true. Nanna ran sobbing to Queen Frigg, who was Balder's mother, and told her all the dreadful dream, asking what could be done to prevent it from coming true.

Now Balder was Queen Frigg's dearest son. Thor

was older and stronger, and more famous for his great deeds; but Frigg loved far better gold-haired Balder. And indeed he was the best-beloved of all the Æsir; for he was gentle, fair, and wise, and wherever he went folk grew happy and light-hearted at the very sight of him, just as we do when we first catch a glimpse of spring peeping over the hilltop into Winterland. So when Frigg heard of Balder's woeful dream, she was frightened almost out of her wits.

"He must not die! He shall not die!" she cried. "He is so dear to all the world, how could there be anything which would hurt him?"

And then a wonderful thought came to Frigg. "I will travel over the world and make all things promise not to injure my boy," she said. "Nothing shall pass my notice. I will get the word of everything."

So first she went to the gods themselves, gathered on Ida Plain for their morning exercise; and telling them of Balder's dream, she begged them to give the promise. Oh, what a shout arose when they heard her words!

"Hurt Balder! — our Balder! Not for the world, we promise! The dream is wrong, — there is nothing so cruel as to wish harm to Balder the beautiful!" they cried. But deep in their hearts they felt a secret fear which would linger until they should hear that all things had given their promise. What if harm were indeed to come to Balder! The thought was too dreadful.

Then Frigg went to see all the beasts who live in field or forest or rocky den. Willingly they gave their promise never to harm hair of gentle Balder. "For he is

ever kind to us," they said, "and we love him as if he were one of ourselves. Not with claws or teeth or hoofs or horns will any beast hurt Balder."

Next Frigg spoke to the birds and fishes, reptiles and insects. And all — even the venomous serpents — cried that Balder was their friend, and that they would never do aught to hurt his dear body. "Not with beak or talon, bite or sting or poison fang, will one of us hurt Balder," they promised.

After doing this, the anxious mother traveled over the whole round world, step by step; and from all the things that are she got the same ready promise never to harm Balder the beautiful. All the trees and plants promised; all the stones and metals; earth, air, fire, and water; sun, snow, wind, and rain, and all diseases that men know, — each gave to Frigg the word of promise which she wanted. So at last, footsore and weary, she came back to Asgard with the joyful news that Balder must be safe, for that there was nothing in the world but had promised to be his harmless friend.

Then there was rejoicing in Asgard, as if the gods had won one of their great victories over the giants. The noble Æsir and the heroes who had died in battle upon the earth, and who had come to Valhalla to live happily ever after, gathered on Ida Plain to celebrate the love of all nature for Balder.

There they invented a famous game, which was to prove how safe he was from the bite of death. They stationed Balder in the midst of them, his face glowing like the sun with the bright light which ever shone from him. And as he stood there all unarmed and smiling,

by turns they tried all sorts of weapons against him; they made as if to beat him with sticks, they stoned him with stones, they shot at him with arrows and hurled mighty spears straight at his heart.

It was a merry game, and a shout of laughter went up as each stone fell harmless at Balder's feet, each stick broke before it touched his shoulders, each arrow overshot his head, and each spear turned aside. For neither stone nor wood nor flinty arrow-point nor bar of iron would break the promise which each had given. Balder was safe with them, just as if he were bewitched. He remained unhurt among the missiles which whizzed about his head, and which piled up in a great heap around the charmed spot whereon he stood.

Now among the crowd that watched these games with such enthusiasm, there was one face that did not smile, one voice that did not rasp itself hoarse with cheering. Loki saw how every one and every thing loved Balder, and he was jealous. He was the only creature in all the world that hated Balder and wished for his death. Yet Balder had never done harm to him. But the wicked plan that Loki had been cherishing was almost ripe, and in this poison fruit was the seed of the greatest sorrow that Asgard had ever known.

While the others were enjoying their game of love, Loki stole away unperceived from Ida Plain, and with a wig of gray hair, a long gown, and a staff, disguised himself as an old woman. Then he hobbled down Asgard streets till he came to the palace of Queen Frigg, the mother of Balder.

"Good-day, my lady," quoth the old woman, in a

EACH ARROW OVERSHOT HIS HEAD

cracked voice. "What is that noisy crowd doing yonder in the green meadow? I am so deafened by their shouts that I can hardly hear myself think."

"Who are you, good mother, that you have not heard?" said Queen Frigg in surprise. "They are shooting at my son Balder. They are proving the word which all things have given me, — the promise not to injure my dear son. And that promise will be kept."

The old crone pretended to be full of wonder. "So, now!" she cried. "Do you mean to say that *every single thing* in the whole world has promised not to hurt your son? I can scarce believe it; though, to be sure, he is as fine a fellow as I ever saw." Of course this flattery pleased Frigg.

"You say true, mother," she answered proudly, "he is a noble son. Yes, everything has promised, — that is, everything except one tiny little plant that is not worth mentioning."

The old woman's eyes twinkled wickedly. "And what is that foolish little plant, my dear?" she asked coaxingly.

"It is the mistletoe that grows in the meadow west of Valhalla. It was too young to promise, and too harmless to bother with," answered Frigg carelessly.

After this her questioner hobbled painfully away. But as soon as she was out of sight from the Queen's palace, she picked up the skirts of her gown and ran as fast as she could to the meadow west of Valhalla. And there, sure enough, as Frigg had said, was a tiny sprig of mistletoe growing on a gnarled oak-tree. The false Loki took out a knife which she carried in some

hidden pocket and cut off the mistletoe very carefully. Then she trimmed and shaped it so that it was like a little green arrow, pointed at one end, but very slender.

"Ho, ho!" chuckled the old woman. "So you are the only thing in all the world that is too young to make a promise, my little mistletoe. Well, young as you are, you must go on an errand for me to-day. And maybe you shall bear a message of my love to Balder the beautiful."

Then she hobbled back to Ida Plain, where the merry game was still going on around Balder. Loki quietly passed unnoticed through the crowd, and came close to the elbow of a big dark fellow who was standing lonely outside the circle of weapon-throwers. He seemed sad and forgotten, and he hung his head in a pitiful way. It was Höd, the blind brother of Balder.

The old woman touched his arm. "Why do you not join the game with the others?" she asked, in her cracked voice. "Are you the only one to do your brother no honor? Surely, you are big and strong enough to toss a spear with the best of them yonder."

Höd touched his sightless eyes madly. "I am blind," he said. "Strength I have, greater than belongs to most of the Æsir. But I cannot see to aim a weapon. Besides, I have no spear to test upon him. Yet how gladly would I do honor to dear Balder!" and he sighed deeply.

"It were a pity if I could not find you at least a little stick to throw," said Loki sympathetically. "I am only a poor old woman, and of course I have no weapon. But ah, — here is a green twig which you can use as an arrow, and I will guide your arm, poor fellow."

Höd's dark face lighted up, for he was eager to take his turn in the game. So he thanked her, and grasped eagerly the little arrow which she put into his hand. Loki held him by the arm, and together they stepped into the circle which surrounded Balder. And when it was Höd's turn to throw his weapon, the old woman stood at his elbow and guided his big arm as it hurled the twig of mistletoe towards where Balder stood.

Oh, the sad thing that befell! Straight through the air flew the little arrow, straight as magic and Loki's arm could direct it. Straight to Balder's heart it sped, piercing through jerkin and shirt and all, to give its bitter message of "Loki's love," as he had said. With a cry Balder fell forward on the grass. And that was the end of sunshine and spring and joy in Asgard, for the dream had come true, and Balder the beautiful was dead.

When the Æsir saw what had happened, there was a great shout of fear and horror, and they rushed upon Höd, who had thrown the fatal arrow.

"What is it? What have I done?" asked the poor blind brother, trembling at the tumult which had followed his shot.

"You have slain Balder!" cried the Æsir. "Wretched Höd, how could you do it?"

"It was the old woman — the evil old woman, who stood at my elbow and gave me a little twig to throw," gasped Höd. "She must be a witch."

Then the Æsir scattered over Ida Plain to look for the old woman who had done the evil deed; but she had mysteriously disappeared.

"It must be Loki," said wise Heimdal. "It is Loki's last and vilest trick."

"Oh, my Balder, my beautiful Balder!" wailed Queen Frigg, throwing herself on the body of her son. "If I had only made the mistletoe give me the promise, you would have been saved. It was I who told Loki of the mistletoe, — so it is I who have killed you. Oh, my son, my son!"

But Father Odin was speechless with grief. His sorrow was greater than that of all the others, for he best understood the dreadful misfortune which had befallen Asgard. Already a cloud had come before the sun, so that it would never be bright day again. Already the flowers had begun to fade and the birds had ceased to sing. And already the Æsir had begun to grow old and joyless, — all because the little misletoe had been too young to give a promise to Queen Frigg.

"Balder the beautiful is dead!" the cry went echoing through all the world, and everything that was sorrowed at the sound of the Æsir's weeping.

Balder's brothers lifted up his beautiful body upon their great war shields and bore him on their shoulders down to the seashore. For, as was the custom in those days, they were going to send him to Hela, the Queen of Death, with all the things he best had loved in Asgard. And these were, — after Nanna his wife, — his beautiful horse, and his ship Hringhorni. So that they would place Balder's body upon the ship with his horse beside him, and set fire to this wonderful funeral pile. For by fire was the quickest passage to Hela's kingdom.

But when they reached the shore, they found that

all the strength of all the Æsir was unable to move Hringhorni, Balder's ship, into the water. For it was the largest ship in the world, and it was stranded far up the beach.

"Even the giants bore no ill-will to Balder," said Father Odin. "I heard the thunder of their grief but now shaking the hills. Let us for this once bury our hatred of that race and send to Jötunheim for help to move the ship."

So they sent a messenger to the giantess Hyrrockin, the hugest of all the Frost People. She was weeping for Balder when the message came.

"I will go, for Balder's sake," she said. Soon she came riding fast upon a giant wolf, with a serpent for the bridle; and mighty she was, with the strength of forty Æsir. She dismounted from her wolf-steed, and tossed the wriggling reins to one of the men-heroes who had followed Balder and the Æsir from Valhalla. But he could not hold the beast, and it took four heroes to keep him quiet, which they could only do by throwing him upon the ground and sitting upon him in a row. And this mortified them greatly.

Then Hyrrockin the giantess strode up to the great ship and seized it by the prow. Easily she gave a little pull, and presto! it leaped forward on its rollers with such force that sparks flew from the flint stones underneath and the whole earth trembled. The boat shot into the waves and out toward open sea so swiftly that the Æsir were likely to have lost it entirely, had not Hyrrockin waded out up to her waist and caught it by the stern just in time.

Thor was angry at her clumsiness, and raised his hammer to punish her. But the other Æsir held his arm.

"She cannot help being so strong," they whispered. "She meant to do well. She did not realize how hard she was pulling. This is no time for anger, brother Thor." So Thor spared her life, as indeed he ought, for her kindness.

Then Balder's body was borne out to the ship and laid upon a pile of beautiful silks, and furs, and cloth-of-gold, and woven sunbeams, which the dwarfs had wrought. So that his funeral pyre was more grand than anything which had ever been seen. But when Nanna, Balder's gentle wife, saw them ready to kindle the flames under this gorgeous bed, she could bear her grief no longer. Her loving heart broke, and they laid her beside him, that they might comfort each other on their journey to Hela. Thor touched the pile gently with his hammer that makes the lightning, and the flames burst forth, lighting up the faces of Balder and Nanna with a glory. Then they cast upon the fire Balder's war-horse, to serve his master in the dark country to which he was about to go. The horse was decked with a harness all of gold, with jewels studding the bridle and headstall. Last of all Odin laid upon the pyre his gift to Balder, Draupnir, the precious ring of gold which the dwarf had made, from which every ninth night there dropped eight other rings as large and brightly golden.

"Take this with you, dear son, to Hela's palace," said Odin. "And do not forget the friends you leave behind in the now lonely halls of Asgard."

Then Hyrrockin pushed the great boat out to sea, with its bonfire of precious things. And on the beach stood all the Æsir watching it out of sight, all the Æsir and many besides. For there came to Balder's funeral great crowds of little dwarfs and multitudes of huge frost giants, all mourning for Balder the beautiful. For this one time they were all friends together, forgetting their quarrels of so many centuries. All of them loved Balder, and were united to do him honor.

The great ship moved slowly out to sea, sending up a red fire to color all the heavens. At last it slid below the horizon softly, as you have often seen the sun set upon the water, leaving a brightness behind to lighten the dark world for a little while.

This indeed was the sunset for Asgard. The darkness of sorrow came in earnest after the passing of Balder the beautiful.

IDUNA'S APPLES

By A. and E. Keary

I

REFLECTIONS IN THE WATER

OF all the groves and gardens round the city of Asgard — and they were many and beautiful — there was none so beautiful as the one where Iduna, the wife of Bragi, lived. It stood on the south side of the hill, not far from Gladsheim, and it was called "Always Young," because nothing that grew there could ever decay, or become the least bit older than it was on the day when Iduna entered it. The trees wore always a tender, light green color, as the hedges do in spring. The flowers were mostly half-opened, and every blade of grass bore always a trembling, glittering drop of early dew. Brisk little winds wandered about the grove, making the leaves dance from morning till night and swaying backwards and forwards the heads of the flowers.

"Blow away!" said the leaves to the wind, "for we shall never be tired."

"And you will never be old," said the winds in answer. And then the birds took up the chorus and sang,—

"Never tired and never old."

Iduna, the mistress of the grove, was fit to live among

young birds, and tender leaves, and spring flowers. She was so fair that when she bent over the river to entice her swans to come to her, even the stupid fish stood still in the water, afraid to destroy so beautiful an image by swimming over it; and when she held out her hand with bread for the swans to eat, you would not have known it from a water-lily, — it was so wonderfully white.

Iduna never left her grove even to pay a visit to her nearest neighbor, and yet she did not lead by any means a dull life; for, besides having the company of her husband, Bragi, — who must have been an entertaining person to live with, for he is said to have known a story which never came to an end, and yet which never grew wearisome, — all the heroes of Asgard made a point of coming to call upon her every day. It was natural enough that they should like to visit so beautiful a grove and so fair a lady; and yet, to confess the truth, it was not quite to see either the grove or Iduna that they came.

Iduna herself was well aware of this, and when her visitors had chatted a short time with her, she never failed to bring out from the innermost recess of her bower a certain golden casket, and to request, as a favor, that her guests would not think of going away till they had tasted her apples, which, she flattered herself, had a better flavor than any other fruit in the world.

It would have been quite unlike a hero of Asgard to have refused such courtesy; and, besides, Iduna was not as far wrong about her apples as hostesses generally are, when they boast of the good things on their tables.

There is no doubt her apples *had* a peculiar flavor; and if any one of the heroes happened to be a little tired, or a little out of spirits, or a little cross, when he came into the bower, it always followed that, as soon as he had eaten one apple, he found himself as fresh and vigorous and happy as he had ever been in his life.

So fond were the heroes of these apples, and so necessary did they think them to their daily comfort, that they never went on a journey without requesting Iduna to give them one or two, to fortify them against the fatigues of the way.

Iduna had no difficulty in complying with this request; she had no fear of her store ever failing, for as surely as she took an apple from her casket another fell in; but where it came from Iduna could never discover. She never saw it till it was close to the bottom of the casket; but she always heard the sweet tinkling sound it made when it touched the golden rim. It was as good as play to Iduna to stand by her casket, taking the apples out, and watching the fresh rosy ones come tumbling in, without knowing who threw them.

One spring morning Iduna was very busy taking apples out of her casket; for several of the heroes were taking advantage of the fine weather to journey out into the world. Bragi was going from home for a time; perhaps he was tired of telling his story only to Iduna, and perhaps she was beginning to know it by heart; and Odin, Loki, and Hœnir had agreed to take a little tour in the direction of Jötunheim, just to see if any entertaining adventure would befall them. When

they had all received their apples and taken a tender farewell of Iduna, the grove — green and fair as it was — looked, perhaps, a little solitary.

Iduna stood by her fountain, watching the bright water as it danced up into the air and quivered, and turned, and fell back, making a hundred little flashing circles in the river; and then she grew tired, for once, of the light and the noise, and wandered down to a still place, where the river was shaded by low bushes on each side, and reflected clearly the blue sky overhead.

Iduna sat down and looked into the deep water. Besides her own fair face there were little wandering white clouds to be seen reflected there. She counted them as they sailed past. At length a strange form was reflected up to her from the water — large, dark, lowering wings, pointed claws, a head with fierce eyes — looking at her.

Iduna started and raised her head. It was above as well as below; the same wings — the same eyes — the same head — looking down from the blue sky, as well as up from the water. Such a sight had never been seen near Asgard before; and, while Iduna looked, the thing waved its wings, and went up, up, up, till it lessened to a dark spot in the clouds and on the river.

It was no longer terrible to look at; but, as it shook its wings a number of little black feathers fell from them, and flew down towards the grove. As they neared the trees, they no longer looked like feathers — each had two independent wings and a head of its own; they were, in fact, a swarm of Nervous Apprehensions, — troublesome little insects enough, and well known

elsewhere, but which now, for the first time, found their way into the grove.

Iduna ran away from them: she shook them off: she fought quite bravely against them: but they are by no means easy to get rid of: and when, at last, one crept within the folds of her dress, and twisted itself down to her heart, a new, strange feeling thrilled there — a feeling never yet known to any dweller in Asgard. Iduna did not know what to make of it.

II

THE WINGED GIANT

In the mean time Odin, Loki, and Hœnir proceeded on their journey. They were not bound on any particular quest. They strayed hither and thither, that Odin might see that things were going on well in the world, and his subjects comporting themselves in a becoming manner. Every now and then they halted while Odin inspected the thatching of a barn, or stood at the smithy to see how the smith wielded his hammer, or in a furrow to observe if the ploughman guided his ploughshare evenly through the soil. "Well done," he said if the workman was working with all his might; and he turned away, leaving something behind him, a straw in the barn, a piece of old iron at the forge-door, a grain in the furrow, — nothing to look at, but ever after the barn was always full, the forge-fire never went out, the field yielded bountifully.

Towards noon the Æsir reached a shady valley,

and, feeling tired and hungry, Odin proposed to sit down under a tree, and while he rested and studied a book of runes which he had with him, he requested Loki and Hœnir to prepare some dinner.

"I will undertake the meat and the fire," said Hœnir; "you, Loki, will like nothing better than foraging about for what *good* things you can pick up."

"That is precisely what I mean to do," said Loki. "There is a farmhouse near here, from which I can perceive a savory smell. It will be strange, with my cunning, if I do not contrive to have the best of all the dishes under this tree before your fire is burnt up."

As Loki spoke he turned a stone in his hand, and immediately he assumed the shape of a large black cat. In this form he stole in at the kitchen window of a farmhouse, where a busy housewife was intent on taking pies and cakes from a deep oven, and ranging them on a dresser under the window. Loki watched his opportunity, and whenever the mistress's back was turned he whisked a cake or a pie out of the window.

"One, two, three. Why, there are fewer every time I bring a fresh one from the oven!" cried the bewildered housewife. "It's that thieving cat. I see the end of her tail on the window-sill." Out of the window leant the housewife to throw a stone at the cat, but she could see nothing but a thin cow trespassing in her garden; and when she ran out with a stick to drive away the cow, it, too, had vanished, and an old raven, with six young ones, was flying over the garden hedge.

The raven was Loki, the little ones were the pies; and when he reached the valley, and changed himself

and them into their proper shapes, he had a hearty laugh at his own cleverness, and at the old woman's dismay.

"Well done, Loki, king of thieves," said a chorus of foxes, who peeped out of their holes to see the only one of the Æsir whose conduct they could appreciate; but Odin, when he heard of it, was very far from thinking it well done. He was extremely displeased with Loki for having disgraced himself by such mean tricks.

"It is true," he said, "that my subjects may well be glad to furnish me with all I require, but it should be done knowingly. Return to the farmhouse, and place these three black stones on the table from whence you stole the provisions."

Loki — unwilling as he was to do anything he believed likely to bring good to others — was obliged to obey. He made himself into the shape of a white owl, flew once more through the window, and dropped the stones out of his beak; they sank deep into the table, and looked like three black stains on the white deal board.

From that time the housewife led an easy life; there was no need for her to grind corn, or mix dough, or prepare meat. Let her enter her kitchen at what time of day she would, stores of provisions stood smoking hot on the table. She kept her own counsel about it, and enjoyed the reputation of being the most economical housekeeper in the whole country-side; but one thing disturbed her mind, and prevented her thoroughly enjoying the envy and wonder of the neighboring wives. All the rubbing, and brushing, and cleaning in the world would not remove the three black stains

from her kitchen table, and as she had no cooking to do, she spent the greater part of her time in looking at them.

"If they were but gone," she said, a hundred times every day, "I should be content; but how is one to enjoy one's life when one cannot rub the stains off one's own table?"

Perhaps Loki foresaw how the good wife would use her gift; for he came back from the farmhouse in the best spirits. "We will now, with Father Odin's permission, sit down to dinner," he said; "for surely, brother Hœnir, while I have been making so many journeys to and fro, you have been doing something with that fire which I see blazing so fiercely, and with that old iron pot smoking over it."

"The meat will be ready by this time, no doubt," said Hœnir. "I killed a wild ox while you were away, and part of it has been now for some time stewing in the pot."

The Æsir now seated themselves near the fire, and Hœnir lifted up the lid of the pot. A thick steam rose up from it; but when he took out the meat it was as red and uncooked as when he first put it into the pot.

"Patience," said Hœnir; and Odin again took out his book of Runes. Another hour passed, and Hœnir again took off the lid, and looked at the meat; but it was in precisely the same state as before. This happened several times, and even the cunning Loki was puzzled; when, suddenly, a strange noise was heard coming from a tree near, and looking up, they saw an enormous human-headed eagle seated on one of the

branches, and looking at them with two fierce eyes. While they looked it spoke.

"Give me my share of the feast," it said, "and the meat shall presently be done."

"Come down and take it — it lies before you," said Loki, while Odin looked on with thoughtful eyes; for he saw plainly that it was no mortal bird who had the boldness to claim a share in the Æsir's food.

Undaunted by Odin's majestic looks, the eagle flew down, and, seizing a large piece of meat, was going to fly away with it, when Loki, thinking he had now got the bird in his power, took up a stick that lay near, and struck a hard blow on the eagle's back. The stick made a ringing sound as it fell; but, when Loki tried to draw it back, he found that it stuck with extraordinary force to the eagle's back; neither could he withdraw his own hands from the other end.

Something like a laugh came from the creature's half human, half bird-like mouth; and then it spread its dark wings and rose up into the air, dragging Loki after.

"It is as I thought," said Odin, as he saw the eagle's enormous bulk brought out against the sky; "it is Thiassi, the strongest giant in Jötunheim, who has presumed to show himself in our presence. Loki has only received the reward of his treachery, and it would ill become us to interfere in his behalf; but, as the monster is near, it will be well for us to return to Asgard, lest any misfortune should befall the city in our absence."

While Odin spoke, the winged creature had risen up so high as to be invisible even to the eyes of the Æsir;

and, during their return to Asgard, he did not again appear before them; but, as they approached the gates of the city, they were surprised to see Loki coming to meet them. He had a crest-fallen and bewildered look; and when they questioned him as to what had happened to him since they parted in such a strange way, he declared himself to be quite unable to give any further account of his adventures than that he had been carried rapidly through the air by the giant, and at last thrown down from a great height near the place where the Æsir met him.

Odin looked steadfastly at him as he spoke, but he forbore to question him further; for he knew well that there was no hope of hearing the truth from Loki, and he kept within his own mind the conviction he felt that some disastrous result must follow a meeting between two such evil-doers as Loki and the giant Thiassi.

That evening, when the Æsir were all feasting and telling stories to one another in the great hall of Valhalla, Loki stole out from Gladsheim, and went alone to visit Iduna in her grove. It was a still, bright evening. The leaves of the trees moved softly up and down, whispering sweet words to each other; the flowers, with half-shut eyes, nodded sleepily to their own reflections in the water, and Iduna sat by the fountain, with her head resting in one hand, thinking of pleasant things.

"It is all very well," thought Loki; "but I am not the happier because people can here live such pleasant lives. It does not do me any good, or cure the pain I have had so long in my heart."

Loki's long shadow — for the sun was setting — fell on the water as he approached, and made Iduna start. She remembered the sight that had disturbed her so much in the morning; but when she saw only Loki, she looked up and smiled kindly; for he had often accompanied the other Æsir in their visits to her grove.

"I am wearied with a long journey," said Loki abruptly, "and I would eat one of your apples to refresh me after my fatigue." The casket stood by Iduna's side, and she immediately put in her hand and gave Loki an apple. To her surprise, instead of thanking her warmly or beginning to eat it, he turned it round and round in his hand with a contemptuous air.

"It is true then," he said, after looking intently at the apple for some time, "your apples are but small and withered in comparison. I was unwilling to believe it at first, but now I can doubt no longer."

"Small and withered!" said Iduna, rising hastily. "Nay, Asa Odin himself, who has traversed the whole world, assures me that he has never seen any to be compared to them."

"That will never be said again," returned Loki; "for this very afternoon I have discovered a tree, in a grove not far from Asgard, on which grow apples so beautiful that no one who has seen them will ever care again for yours."

"I do not wish to see or hear of them," said Iduna, trying to turn away with an indifferent air; but Loki followed her, and continued to speak more and more strongly of the beauty of this new fruit, hinting that Iduna would be sorry that she had refused to listen when

she found all her guests deserting her for the new grove, and when even Bragi began to think lightly of her and of her gifts. At this Iduna sighed, and Loki came up close to her, and whispered in her ear, —

"It is but a short way from Asgard, and the sun has not yet set. Come out with me, and, before any one else has seen the apples, you shall gather them, and put them in your casket, and no woman shall ever have it in her power to boast that she can feast the Æsir more sumptuously than Iduna."

Now Iduna had often been cautioned by her husband never to let anything tempt her to leave the grove, and she had always been so happy here that she thought there was no use in his telling her the same thing so often over, but now her mind was so full of the wonderfully beautiful fruit, and she felt such a burning wish to get it for herself, that she quite forgot her husband's commands.

"It is only a little way," she said to herself; "there can be no harm in going out just this once;" and, as Loki went on urging her, she took up her casket from the ground hastily, and begged him to show her the way to this other grove. Loki walked very quickly, and Iduna had not time to collect her thoughts before she found herself at the entrance of Always Young. At the gate she would gladly have stopped a minute to take breath; but Loki took hold of her hand, and forced her to pass through, though, at the very moment of passing, she half drew back; for it seemed to her as if all the trees in the grove suddenly called out in alarm, "Come back, come back, oh, come back, Iduna!" She

half drew back her hand, but it was too late: the gate fell behind her, and she and Loki stood together without the grove.

The trees rose up between them and the setting sun, and cast a deep shadow on the place where they stood; a cold night air blew on Iduna's cheek, and made her shiver.

"Let us hasten on," she said to Loki; "let us hasten on, and soon come back again."

But Loki was not looking on, he was looking up. Iduna raised her eyes in the direction of his, and her heart died within her; for there, high up over her head, just as she had seen it in the morning, hung the lowering, dark wings — the sharp talons — the fierce head, looking at her. For one moment it stood still above her head, and then lower, lower, lower, the huge shadow fell; and, before Iduna found breath to speak, the dark wings were folded round her, and she was borne high up in the air, northwards, towards the gray mist that hangs over Jötunheim. Loki watched till she was out of sight, and then returned to Asgard. The presence of the giant was no wonder to him; for he had, in truth, purchased his own release by promising to deliver up Iduna and her casket into his power; but, as he returned alone through the grove, a foreboding fear pressed on his mind.

"If it should be true," he thought, "that Iduna's apples have the wonderful power Odin attributes to them! if I among the rest should suffer from the loss!"

Occupied with these thoughts, he passed quickly among the trees, keeping his eyes resolutely fixed on

the ground. He dared not trust himself to look round; for once, when he had raised his head, he fancied that, gliding through the brushwood, he had seen the dark robes and pale face of his daughter Hela.

III

HELA

When it was known that Iduna had disappeared from her grove, there were many sorrowful faces in Asgard, and anxious voices were heard inquiring for her. Loki walked about with as grave a face, and asked as many questions, as any one else; but he had a secret fear that became stronger every day, that now, at last, the consequence of his evil ways would find him out.

Days passed on, and the looks of care, instead of wearing away, deepened on the faces of the Æsir. They met, and looked at each other, and turned away sighing; each saw that some strange change was creeping over all the others, and none liked to be the first to speak of it. It came on very gradually — a little change every day, and no day ever passing without the change. The leaves of the trees in Iduna's grove deepened in color. They first became a sombre green, then a glowing red, and, at last a pale brown; and when the brisk winds came and blew them about, they moved every day more languidly.

"Let us alone," they said at length. "We are tired, tired, tired."

The winds, surprised, carried the new sound to Gladsheim, and whispered it all round the banquet-hall where the Æsir sat, and then they rushed back again, and blew all through the grove.

"We are tired," said the leaves again; "we are tired, we are old; we are going to die;" and at the word they broke from the trees one by one, and fluttered to the ground, glad to rest anywhere; and the winds, having nothing else to do, went back to Gladsheim with the last strange word they had learned.

The Æsir were all assembled in Valhalla; but there were no stories told, and no songs sung. No one spoke much but Loki, and he was that day in a talking humor. He moved from one to another, whispering an unwelcome word in every ear.

"Have you noticed your mother Frigga?" he said to Baldur. "Do you see how white her hair is growing, and what a number of deep lines are printed on her face?"

Then he turned to Frey. "Look at your sister Freyja and your friend Baldur," he said, "as they sit opposite to us. What a change has come over them lately! Who would think that that pale man and that faded woman were Baldur the beautiful and Freyja the fair?"

"You are tired — you are old — you are going to die," moaned the winds, wandering all round the great halls, and coming in and out of the hundred doorways; and all the Æsir looked up at the sad sound. Then they saw, for the first time, that a new guest had seated herself that day at the table of the Æsir. There could be no question of her fitness on the score of royalty, for a crown rested on her brow, and in her hand she

held a sceptre; but the fingers that grasped the sceptre were white and fleshless, and under the crown looked the threatening face of Hela, half corpse, half queen.

A great fear fell on all the Æsir as they looked, and only Odin found voice to speak to her. "Dreadful daughter of Loki!" he said, "by what warrant do you dare to leave the kingdom where I permit you to reign, and come to take your place among the Æsir, who are no mates for such as you?"

Then Hela raised her bony finger, and pointed, one by one, to the guests that sat round. "White hair," she said, "wrinkled faces, weary limbs, dull eyes — these are the warrants which have summoned me from the land of shadows to sit among the Æsir. I have come to claim you, by these signs, as my future guests, and to tell you that I am preparing a place for you in my kingdom."

At every word she spoke a gust of icy wind came from her mouth and froze the blood in the listeners' veins. If she had stayed a moment longer they would have stiffened into stone; but when she had spoken thus, she rose and left the hall, and the sighing winds went out with her.

Then, after a long silence, Bragi stood up and spoke. "Æsir," he said, "we are to blame. It is now many months since Iduna was carried away from us; we have mourned for her, but we have not yet avenged her loss. Since she left us a strange weariness and despair have come over us, and we sit looking on each other as if we had ceased to be warriors and Æsir. It is plain that, unless Iduna returns, we are lost. Let two of us journey

to the Urda fount, which we have so long neglected to visit, and inquire of her from the Norns — for they know all things — and then, when we have learnt where she is, we will fight for her liberty, if need be, till we die; for that will be an end more fitting for us then to sit here and wither away under the breath of Hela."

At these words of Bragi, the Æsir felt a revival of their old strength and courage. Odin approved of Bragi's proposal, and decreed that he and Baldur should undertake the journey to the dwelling-place of the Norns. That very evening they set forth; for Hela's visit showed them that they had no time to lose.

It was a weary time to the dwellers in Asgard while they were absent. Two new citizens had taken up their abode in the city, Age and Pain. They walked the streets hand-in-hand, and there was no use in shutting the doors against them; for however closely the entrance was barred, the dwellers in the houses felt them as they passed.

IV

THROUGH FLOOD AND FIRE

At length Baldur and Bragi returned with the answer of the Norns, couched in mystic words, which Odin alone could understand. It revealed Loki's treacherous conduct to the Æsir, and declared that Iduna could only be brought back by Loki, who must go in search of her, clothed in Freyja's garments of falcon feathers.

Loki was very unwilling to venture on such a search;

but Thor threatened him with instant death if he refused to obey Odin's commands, or failed to bring back Iduna; and for his own safety he was obliged to allow Freyja to fasten the falcon wings to his shoulders, and to set off towards Thiassi's castle in Jötunheim, where he well knew that Iduna was imprisoned.

It was called a castle; but it was, in reality, a hollow in a dark rock; the sea broke against two sides of it; and, above, the sea-birds clamored day and night.

There the giant had taken Iduna on the night on which she had left her grove; and, fearing lest Odin should spy her from Air Throne, he had shut her up in a gloomy chamber, and strictly forbidden her ever to come out. It was hard to be shut up from the fresh air and sunshine; and yet, perhaps, it was safer for Iduna than if she had been allowed to wander about Jötunheim, and see the monstrous sights that would have met her there.

She saw nothing but Thiassi himself and his servants, whom he had commanded to attend upon her; and they, being curious to see a stranger from a distant land, came in and out many times every day.

They were fair, Iduna saw — fair and smiling; and at first it relieved her to see such pleasant faces round her, when she had expected something horrible.

"Pity me!" she used to say to them; "pity me! I have been torn away from my home and my husband, and I see no hope of ever getting back." And she looked earnestly at them; but their pleasant faces never changed, and there was always — however bitterly Iduna might be weeping — the same smile on their lips.

At length Iduna, looking more narrowly at them, saw, when they turned their backs to her, that they were hollow behind; they were, in truth, Ellewomen, who have no hearts, and can never pity any one.

After Iduna saw this she looked no more at their smiling faces, but turned away her head and wept silently. It is very sad to live among Ellewomen when one is in trouble.

Every day the giant came and thundered at Iduna's door. "Have you made up your mind yet," he used to say, "to give me the apples? Something dreadful will happen to you if you take much longer to think of it." Iduna trembled very much every day, but still she had strength to say, "No;" for she knew that the *most* dreadful thing would be for her to give to a wicked giant the gifts that had been entrusted to her for the use of the Æsir. The giant would have taken the apples by force if he could; but, whenever he put his hand into the casket, the fruit slipped from beneath his fingers, shriveled into the size of a pea, and hid itself in crevices of the casket where his great fingers could not come — only when Iduna's little white hand touched it, it swelled again to its own size, and this she would never do while the giant was with her. So the days passed on, and Iduna would have died of grief among the smiling Ellewomen if it had not been for the moaning sound of the sea and the wild cry of the birds; "for, however others may smile, these pity me," she used to say, and it was like music to her.

One morning when she knew that the giant had gone out, and when the Ellewomen had left her alone, she

stood for a long time at her window by the sea, watching the mermaids floating up and down on the waves, and looking at heaven with their sad blue eyes. She knew that they were mourning because they had no souls, and she thought within herself that even in prison it was better to belong to the Æsir than to be a mermaid or an Ellewoman, were they ever so free or happy.

While she was still occupied with these thoughts she heard her name spoken, and a bird with large wings flew in at the window, and, smoothing its feathers, stood upright before her. It was Loki in Freyja's garment of feathers, and he made her understand in a moment that he had come to set her free, and that there was no time to lose. He told her to conceal her casket carefully in her bosom, and then he said a few words over her, and she found herself changed into a sparrow, with the casket fastened among the feathers of her breast.

Then Loki spread his wings once more, and flew out of the window, and Iduna followed him. The sea-wind blew cold and rough, and her little wings fluttered with fear; but she struck them bravely out into the air and flew like an arrow over the water.

"This way lies Asgard," cried Loki, and the word gave her strength. But they had not gone far when a sound was heard above the sea, and the wind, and the call of the sea-birds. Thiassi had put on his eagle plumage, and was flying after them. For five days and five nights the three flew over the water that divides Jötunheim from Asgard, and at the end of every day they were closer together, for the giant was gaining on the other two.

All the five days the dwellers in Asgard stood on the walls of the city, watching. On the sixth evening they saw a falcon and a sparrow, closely pursued by an eagle, flying towards Asgard.

"There will not be time," said Bragi, who had been calculating the speed at which they flew. "The eagle will reach them before they can get into the city."

But Odin desired a fire to be lighted upon the walls; and Thor and Tyr, with what strength remained to them, tore up the trees from the groves and gardens, and made a rampart of fire all round the city. The light of the fire showed Iduna her husband and her friends waiting for her. She made one last effort, and, rising high up in the air above the flames and smoke, she passed the walls, and dropped down safely at the foot of Odin's throne. The giant tried to follow; but, wearied with his long flight, he was unable to raise his enormous bulk sufficiently high in the air. The flames scorched his wings as he flew through them, and he fell among the flaming piles of wood, and was burnt to death.

How Iduna feasted the Æsir on her apples, how they grew young and beautiful again, and how spring and green leaves and music came back to the grove, I must leave you to imagine, for I have made my story long enough already; and if I say any more you will fancy that it is Bragi who has come among you, and that he has entered on his endless story.

Iduna has a connection with the underworld, carried away by a giant and kept captive in his frozen regions,

the earth meanwhile becoming winterly, old; death threatening all things. Her story is curiously hinted at in the Elder Edda, where Iduna is represented as falling down from Yggdrasil's Ash into the nether world. Odin sends Heimdall and Bragi to bring her up again, and to ascertain from her if she has been able to discover anything about the destruction and duration of the world and heaven. Instead of answering she bursts into tears — the bright, tearful return of spring — or may this mean the impossibility of wringing from Nature answers to the questions and longings that fill the heart; even the tender year with its messages of hope and hints of immortality is unable to give the full assurance for which we yearn.

Iduna is supposed to typify the Spring, and her falling into captivity for a time to the giant Thiassi corresponds to the falling of the leaf in autumn. The union of Poetry with Spring seems very appropriate, and we must not forget to mention that Bragi's name calls to mind the old story of the Bragarfull. At feasts, in old times, it was the custom to drink four cups of mead: one to Odin for victory, one to Frey, and one to Niörd for a good year and peace, and the fourth to Bragi. This was called the "Cup of Vows," and the drinker vowed over it to perform some great deed worthy of the song of a skald.

In connection with the story of Iduna — being, indeed, almost a sequel to it — we find the myth of Skadi, which is as follows: —

The giant Thiassi had a very tall daughter, called Skadi. When she found that her father never returned

from his pursuit of Iduna, she put on her armor and set off to Asgard to avenge his death. The heroes, however, were not inclined to allow her the honor of a combat. They suggested to her that, perhaps, it would answer her purpose as well if, instead of fighting them, she were to content herself with marrying one of their number, and it appeared to Skadi that this might possibly be revenge enough. The Æsir, however, could not make up their minds who should be the victim. It was agreed, at last, that they should all stand in some place of concealment where only their feet could be seen, and that Skadi should walk before them, and, by looking at the feet, choose her husband. Now, Skadi had privately made up her mind to marry Baldur; so, after looking carefully at all the feet, she stopped before a pair, which, from their beautiful shape, she thought could only belong to the handsome Sun-god. When, however, the figure belonging to the feet emerged from the hiding-place, it was discovered that she had chosen the bluff, gusty old Niörd instead of the beautiful young Baldur; and she was not particularly well pleased with her choice, though she was obliged to abide by it.

When Skadi and Niörd were married they found, as persons do find who marry each other for the shape of their feet, and other such wise reasons, that it was not at all an easy thing to live happily together. They could not even agree about the place where they should live. Skadi was never happy out of Thrymheim, the home of noise in misty Jötunheim, and Niörd could not forget pleasant Nöatun, and the clear, sunny seas

where he had dwelt in his youth. At last they agreed that they would spend three days in Nöatun, and nine days in Thrymheim; but one day, when Niörd was returning to Nöatun, he could not help breaking out into the following song: —

"Of mountains I am weary,
Nine nights long and dreary,
All up the misty hill,
The wolf's long howl I heard.
Methought it sounded strangely —
Methought it sounded ill
To the song of the swan bird."

And Skadi immediately answered: —

"Never can I sleep
In my couch by the strand,
For the wild, restless waves
Rolling over the sand,
For the scream of the seagulls,
For the mew as he cries,
These sounds chase forever
Sweet sleep from mine eyes."

Then, putting on a pair of snow-skates, she set off more swiftly than the wind, and Niörd never saw more of her. Ever afterwards, with her bow in her hand, she spent her time in chasing wild animals over the snow, and she is the queen and patroness of all skaters.

THE WONDERFUL QUERN STONES

By Julia Goddard

ONCE upon a time there was a king of Denmark, or Gotland, as it was then called, whose name was Frothi. He was a great-grandson of the god Thor, and a very mighty king, and wherever the Danish language was spoken there was Frothi's name honored and respected.

Among his treasures were two quern stones; nothing much to look at, simply two common millstones in appearance, and no one who did not know what they could do would think of taking any notice of them. Nevertheless, these quern stones were of more worth than anything that King Frothi had, for they could produce anything that the grinder of the quern or hand-mill wished for. They would bring gold, silver, precious stones, anything and everything; and besides this they could grind love, joy, peace; therefore it is not too much to say that these stones were worth more than all the treasures of the king put together.

At least they would have been if he could have made use of them, but they were so heavy that few could be found to turn the quern, and just at the time of which I am speaking there was no one at all in the land of Gotland able to work away at the quern handle.

Now the more King Frothi pondered over his won-

derful quern stones, the greater became his desire to use them, and he sought throughout the land from north to south, from east to west, if perchance he might find some one strong enough to help him in his need. But all to no purpose, and he was utterly in despair when, by good luck, he happened to go on a visit to Fiölnir, king of Sweden, and to hear of two slave-women of great size and strength. Surely, thought Frothi, these are just the women to grind at my quern Grotti (for so it was called), and he asked King Fiölnir to be allowed to see them.

So King Fiölnir ordered the slaves to be brought before Frothi, and when Frothi saw them his spirits rose, for certainly Menia and Fenia were strong-looking women. They were eight feet in height, and broader across the shoulders than any of Frothi's warriors, and the muscles of their arms stood out like cords. And they lifted heavy weights, threw heavy javelins, and did so many feats of strength that Frothi felt quite sure that they would be able to turn the quern handle.

"I will buy these slaves," said he, "and take them with me to Gotland."

Menia and Fenia stood with their arms folded and their proud heads bowed down, whilst Frothi counted out the gold to the seller. They were slaves; with money had they been bought, with money were they sold again. What cared Frothi who was their father, or how they had come into the land of Sweden?

And he took them home with him and bade them grind at the quern. Now he should be able to test the power of the wonderful stones.

"Grind, grind, Menia and Fenia, let me see whether ye have strength for the work."

So spake King Frothi, and the huge women lifted the heavy stones as though they had been pebbles.

"What shall we grind?" asked the slaves.

"Gold, gold, peace and wealth for Frothi."

Gold! gold! the land was filled with riches. Treasure in the king's palace, treasure in the coffers of his subjects — gold! gold! There were no poor in the land, no beggars in the streets, no children crying for bread. All honor to the quern stones!

Peace! peace! no more war in the land; Frothi is at peace with every one. And more than that, there was peace in all countries where Frothi's name was known, even to the far south; and every one talked of Frothi's peace. Praise be to the quern stones!

Wealth! yes, everything went well. Not one of the counsels of King Frothi failed. There was not a green field that did not yield a rich crop; not a tree but bent beneath its weight of fruit; not a stream that ran dry; not a vessel that sailed from the harbors of Gotland that came not back, after a fair voyage, in safety to its haven. There was good luck everywhere.

"Grind on, grind on, Menia and Fenia! good fortune is mine," said King Frothi.

And the slaves ground on.

"When shall we rest, when may we rest, King Frothi? It is weary work toiling day and night."

"No longer than whilst the cuckoo is silent in the spring."

"Never ceasing is the cry of the cuckoo in the groves; may we not rest longer?"

"Not longer," answered King Frothi, "than whilst the verse of a song is sung."

"That is but little!" sighed Menia and Fenia, and they toiled on. Their arms were weary and their eyes heavy, they would fain have slept; but Frothi would not let them have any sleep. They were but slaves who must obey their master, so they toiled on, still grinding peace and wealth to Frothi: —

"To Frothi and his queen
Joy and peace —
May plenty in the land
Still increase.
Frothi and his queen
From dangers keep;
May they on beds of down
Sweetly sleep.
No sword be drawn
In Gotland old,
By murderer bold.
No harm befall
The high or low —
To none be woe,
Good luck to all.
Good luck to all,
We grind, we grind.
No rest we find,
For rest we call."

Thus sang the two giant women; then they begged again, "Give us rest, O Frothi!"

But still Frothi answered, "Rest whilst the verse of a song is sung, or as long as the cuckoo is silent in the spring."

No longer would the king give them.

Yet Frothi was deemed a good king, but gold and good luck were hardening his heart.

Menia and Fenia went on grinding, and their wrath grew deeper and deeper, and thus at last they spoke.

First said Fenia, "Thou wert not wise, O Frothi. Thou didst buy us because like giants we towered above the other slaves, because we were strong and hardy and could lift heavy burdens."

And Menia took up the wail: "Are we not of the race of the mountain giants? Are not our kindred greater than thine, O Frothi? The quern had never left the gray fell but for the giants' daughters. Never, never should we have ground as we have done, had it not been that we remembered from what race we sprang."

Then answered Menia: "Nine long winters saw us training to feats of strength, nine long winters of wearisome labor. Deep down in the earth we toiled and toiled until we could move the high mountain from its foundations. We are weird women, O Frothi. We can see far into the future. Our eyes have looked upon the quern before. In the giants' house we whirled it until the earth shook, and hoarse thunder resounded through the caverns. Thou art not wise, O Frothi. O Frothi, thou art not wise!"

But Frothi heard them not; he was sleeping the sweet sleep that the quern stones had ground for him.

"Strong are we indeed," laughed Fenia sorrowfully, "strong to contend with the puny men, — we whose pastime in Sweden was to tame the fiercest bears, so that they ate from our hands; we who fought with mighty

warriors and came off conquerors; we who helped one prince and put down another. Well we fought, and many were the wounds we received from sharp spears and flashing swords. Frothi knows not our power, or he would scarce have brought us to his palace to treat us thus. Here no one has compassion upon us. Cold are the skies above us, and the pitiless wind beats upon our breasts. Cold is the ground on which we stand, and the keen frost bites our feet. Ah, there are none to pity us. No one cares for the slaves. We grind forever an enemy's quern, and he gives us no rest. Grind, grind; I am weary of grinding; I must have rest."

"Nay," returned Menia, "talk not of rest until Frothi is content with what we bring him."

Then Fenia started: "If he gives us no rest, let us take it ourselves. Why should we any longer grind good for him who only gives us evil? We can grind what we please. Let us revenge ourselves."

Then Menia turned the handle quicker than ever, and in a wild voice she sang:—

"I see a ship come sailing
With warriors bold aboard,
There 's many a one that in Danish blood
Would be glad to dip his sword.
Say, shall we grind them hither?
Say, shall they land to-night?
Say, shall they set the palace afire?
Say, shall they win the fight?"

Then called Fenia in a voice of thunder through the midnight air: "Frothi, Frothi, awake, awake! Wilt

thou not listen to us? Have mercy and let us rest our weary limbs."

But all was still, and Frothi gave no answer to the cry.

"Nay," answered Menia, "he will not hearken. Little he cares for the worn-out slaves. Revenge, revenge!"

And Frothi slept, not dreaming of the evil that was coming upon him.

And again Fenia shouted: "Frothi, Frothi, awake! The beacon is blazing. Danger is nigh. Wilt thou not spare?"

But Frothi gave no answer, and the giant women toiled on.

"O Frothi, Frothi, we cannot bear our weariness."

And still no answer came.

"Frothi, Frothi, danger is nigh thee. Well-manned ships are gliding over the sea. It is Mysingr who comes: his white sail flutters in the wind; his flag is unfurled. Frothi, Frothi, awake, awake! thou shalt be king no longer."

And as the giant women ground, the words they spake came to pass, — they were grinding revenge for themselves, and brought the enemy nearer and nearer.

"Ho! hearken to the herald! Frothi, Frothi, the town is on fire. The palaces will soon be ruined heaps. Grind, Menia, ever more swiftly, until we grind death to Frothi."

And Menia and Fenia ground and ground till Mysingr and his followers landed from the ships. They ground until they had reached the palace.

"To arms, to arms!" shouted the warders, but it

was too late. The Gotlanders armed themselves; but who could stand against the army that the slave women were grinding against them?

Not long did the struggle last. Frothi and his Gotlanders fought bravely, but the sea-king and his allies were mightier, for the giantesses were in giant mood, and turned the handle faster and faster, until down fell the quern stones. Then sank Frothi pierced with wounds, and the fight was over. The army that Menia and Fenia had ground to help Mysingr vanished; and Mysingr and his men alone were left conquerors on the bloody field.

They loaded their ships with treasure, and Mysingr took with him Menia, Fenia, and the quern stones.

But, alas! Mysingr was no wiser than King Frothi had been.

Gold, however, was not his first thought; he had enough of that, but he wanted something else that just then was more to him than gold.

There was no salt on board the sea-king's vessels; so he said, "Grind salt."

And Menia and Fenia ground salt for Mysingr.

At midnight they asked if they had ground enough.

And Mysingr bade them grind on.

And so they ground and ground until the ship was so heavy with salt that it sank, and the sea-king and all his men were drowned.

Where the quern stones went down there is to this day a great whirlpool, and the waters of the sea have been salt ever since.

MYTHS OF JAPAN

THE ASHES THAT MADE TREES BLOOM

By William Elliot Griffis

IN the good old days of the daimios, there lived an old couple whose only pet was a little dog. Having no children, they loved it as though it were a baby. The old dame made it a cushion of blue crape, and at meal-time Muko — for that was its name — would sit on it as demure as any cat. The kind people fed the pet with tidbits of fish from their own chopsticks, and it was allowed to have all the boiled rice it wanted. Whenever the old woman took the animal out with her on holidays, she put a bright-red silk crape ribbon around its neck. Thus treated, the dumb creature loved its protectors like a being with a soul.

Now the old man, being a rice-farmer, went daily with hoe or spade into the fields, working hard from the first croak of the raven until O Tento Sama (as the sun is called) had gone down behind the hills. Every day the dog followed him to work, and kept near by, never once harming the white heron that walked in the footsteps of the old man to pick up the worms. For the old fellow was kind to everything that had life, and often turned up a sod on purpose to give food to the sacred birds.

One day doggy came running to him, putting his

paws against his straw leggings, and motioning with his head to some spot behind. The old man at first thought his pet was only playing, and did not mind it. But the dog kept on whining and running to and fro for some minutes. Then the old man followed the dog a few yards to a place where the animal began a lively scratching. Thinking it only a buried bone or bit of fish, but wishing to humor his pet, the old man struck his iron-shod hoe in the earth, when, lo! a pile of gold gleamed before him.

He rubbed his old eyes, stooped down to look, and there was at least a half peck of *kobans*, or oval gold coins. He gathered them and hied home at once.

Thus in an hour the old couple were made rich. The good souls bought a piece of land, made a feast to their friends, and gave plentifully to their poor neighbors. As for doggy, they petted him till they nearly smothered him with kindness.

Now in the same village there lived a wicked old man and his wife, who had always kicked and scolded all dogs whenever any passed their house. Hearing of their neighbors' good luck, they coaxed the dog into their garden and set before him bits of fish and other dainties, hoping he would find treasure for them. But the dog, being afraid of the cruel pair, would neither eat nor move.

Then they dragged him out of doors, taking a spade and hoe with them. No sooner had doggy got near a pine-tree growing in the garden than he began to paw and scratch the ground, as if a mighty treasure lay beneath.

"Quick, wife, hand me the spade and hoe!" cried the greedy old fool, as he danced with joy.

Then the covetous old fellow, with a spade, and the old crone, with a hoe, began to dig; but there was nothing but a dead kitten, the smell of which made them drop their tools and shut their noses. Furious at the dog, the old man kicked and beat him to death, and the old woman finished the work by nearly chopping off his head with the sharp hoe. They then flung him into the hole, and stamped down the earth over his carcass.

The owner of the dog heard of the death of his pet, and, mourning for him as if it had been his own child, went at night under the pine-tree. He set up some bamboo tubes in the ground, such as are used before tombs, in which he put fresh camellia flowers. Then he laid a cup of water and a tray of food on the grave, and burned several costly sticks of incense. He mourned a great while over his pet, calling him many dear names, as if he were alive.

That night the spirit of the dog appeared to him in a dream and said, —

"Cut down the pine-tree which is over my grave, and make from it a mortar for your rice pastry, and a mill for your bean sauce."

So the old man chopped down the tree, and cut out of the middle of the trunk a section about two feet long. With great labor, partly by fire, partly by the chisel, he scraped out a hollow place as big as a half-bushel. He then made a great, long-handled hammer of wood, such as is used for pounding rice. When New Year's

time drew near, he wished to make some rice pastry. So the white rice in the basket, and the fire and pot to boil the rice dumplings, and the pretty red lacquered boxes, were got ready. The old man knotted his blue kerchief round his head, the old lady tucked up her sleeves, and all was ready for cake-making.

When the rice was all boiled, granny put it into the mortar, the old man lifted his hammer to pound the mass into dough, and the blows fell heavy and fast till the pastry was all ready for baking. Suddenly the whole mass turned into a heap of gold coins. When, too, the old woman took the hand-mill, and, filling it with bean sauce, began to grind, the gold dropped like rain.

Meanwhile the envious neighbor peeped in at the window when the boiled beans were being ground.

"Goody me!" cried the old hag, as she saw each dripping of sauce turning into yellow gold, until in a few minutes the tub under the mill was full of a shining mass of *kobans* (oval gold pieces). "I'll borrow that mill, I will."

So the old couple were rich again. The next day the stingy and wicked neighbor, having boiled a mess of beans, came and borrowed the mortar and magic mill. They filled one with boiled rice and the other with beans. Then the old man began to pound and the woman to grind. But at the first blow and turn, the pastry and sauce turned into a foul mass of worms. Still more angry at this, they chopped the mill into pieces, to use as firewood.

Not long after that, the good old man dreamed again,

and the spirit of the dog spoke to him, telling him how the wicked people had burned the mill made from the pine-tree.

"Take the ashes of the mill, sprinkle them on the withered trees, and they will bloom again," said the dog-spirit.

The old man awoke, and went at once to his wicked neighbor's house, where he found the miserable old pair sitting at the edge of their square fireplace, in the middle of the floor, smoking and spinning. From time to time they warmed their hands and feet with the blaze from some bits of the mill, while behind them lay a pile of the broken pieces.

The good old man humbly begged the ashes, and though the covetous couple turned up their noses at him, and scolded him as if he were a thief, they let him fill his basket with the ashes.

On coming home, the old man took his wife into the garden. It being winter, their favorite cherry-tree was bare. He sprinkled a pinch of ashes on it, and, lo! it sprouted blossoms until it became a cloud of pink blooms which perfumed the air. The news of this filled the village, and every one ran out to see the wonder.

The covetous couple also heard the story, and, gathering up the remaining ashes of the mill, kept them to make withered trees blossom.

The kind old man, hearing that his lord the daimio was to pass along the high road near the village, set out to see him, taking his basket of ashes. As the train approached, he climbed up into an old withered cherry-tree that stood by the wayside.

Now, in the days of the daimios, it was the custom, when their lord passed by, for all the loyal people to shut up their second-story windows. They even pasted them fast with a slip of paper, so as not to commit the impertinence of looking down on his lordship. All the people along the road would fall upon their hands and knees, and remain prostrate until the procession passed by. Hence it seemed very impolite, at first, for the old man to climb the tree and be higher than his master's head.

The train drew near, with all its pomp of gay banners, covered spears, state umbrellas, and princely crests. One tall man marched ahead, crying out to the people by the way, "Get down on your knees! Get down on your knees!" And every one kneeled down while the procession was passing.

Suddenly the leader of the van caught sight of the aged man up in the tree. He was about to call out to him in an angry tone, but, seeing he was such an old fellow, he pretended not to notice him and passed him by. So, when the daimio's palanquin drew near, the old man, taking a pinch of ashes from his basket, scattered it over the tree. In a moment it burst into blossom.

The delighted daimio ordered the train to be stopped, and got out to see the wonder. Calling the old man to him, he thanked him, and ordered presents of silk robes, sponge-cake, fans, a *nétsŭké* (ivory carving), and other rewards to be given him. He even invited him to visit him in his castle.

So the old man went gleefully home to share his joy with his dear old wife.

But when the greedy neighbor heard of it, he took some of the magic ashes and went out on the highway. There he waited until a daimio's train came along, and, instead of kneeling down like the crowd, he climbed a withered cherry-tree.

When the daimio himself was almost directly under him, he threw a handful of ashes over the tree, which did not change a particle. The wind blew the fine dust in the noses and eyes of the daimio and his Samurai. Such a sneezing and choking! It spoiled all the pomp and dignity of the procession. The man whose business it was to cry, "Get down on your knees," seized the old fool by the topknot, dragged him from the tree, and tumbled him and his ash-basket into the ditch by the road. Then, beating him soundly, he left him for dead.

Thus the wicked old man died in the mud, but the kind friend of the dog dwelt in peace and plenty, and both he and his wife lived to a green old age.

THE ELVES AND THE ENVIOUS NEIGHBOR

By A. B. Mitford

ONCE upon a time there was a certain man, who, being overtaken by darkness among the mountains, was driven to seek shelter in the trunk of a hollow tree. In the middle of the night, a large company of elves assembled at the place; and the man, peeping out from his hiding-place, was frightened out of his wits. After a while, however, the elves began to feast and drink wine, and to amuse themselves by singing and dancing, until at last the man, caught by the infection of the fun, forgot all about his fright, and crept out of his hollow tree to join in the revels. When the day was about to dawn, the elves said to the man, "You 're a very jolly companion, and must come out and have a dance with us again. You must make us a promise, and keep it." So the elves, thinking to bind the man over to return, took a large wen that grew on his forehead and kept it in pawn; upon this they all left the place, and went home. The man walked off to his own house in high glee at having passed a jovial night, and got rid of his wen into the bargain. So he told the story to all his friends, who congratulated him warmly on being cured of his wen. But there was a neighbor of his who was also troubled with a wen of long standing, and, when he

heard of his friend's luck, he was smitten with envy, and went off to hunt for the hollow tree, in which, when he had found it, he passed the night.

Towards midnight the elves came, as he had expected, and began feasting and drinking, with songs and dances as before. As soon as he saw this, he came out of his hollow tree, and began dancing and singing as his neighbor had done. The elves, mistaking him for their former boon-companion, were delighted to see him, and said, —

"You're a good fellow to recollect your promise, and we'll give you back your pledge;" so one of the elves, pulling the pawned wen out of his pocket, stuck it on to the man's forehead, on the top of the other wen which he already had. So the envious neighbor went home weeping, with two wens instead of one. This is a good lesson to people who cannot see the good luck of others, without coveting it for themselves.

NEDZUMI

By Frank Rinder

IN the Central Land of Reed-Plains dwelt two rats. Their home was in a lonely farmstead surrounded by rice fields. Here they lived happily for so many years that the other rats in the district, who had constantly to change their quarters, believed that their neighbors were under the special protection of Fukoruku Jin, one of the Seven Gods of Happiness, and the Patron of Long Life.

These rats had a large family of children. Every summer day they led the little ones into the rice fields, where, under shelter of the waving stalks, the young rats learned the history and cunning of their people. When work was done, they would scamper away and play with their friends until it was time to return home.

The most beautiful of these children was Nedzumi, the pride of her parents' hearts. She was truly a lovely little creature, with sleek silvery skin, bright intelligent eyes, tiny upstanding ears, and pearly white teeth. It seemed to the fond father and mother that no one was great enough to marry their daughter; but, after much pondering, they decided that the most powerful being in the whole universe should be their son-in-law.

The parents discussed the weighty question with a trusted neighbor, who said, "If you would wed your

daughter to the most powerful being in the universe, you must ask the sun to marry her, for his empire knows no bounds."

How they mounted through the skies, no rat can tell. The sun gave them audience and listened graciously as they said, "We would give you our daughter to wife." He smiled and rejoined, "Your daughter is indeed beautiful, and I thank you for coming so far to offer her to me. But, tell me, why have you chosen me out of all the world?" The rats made answer, "We would marry our Nedzumi to the mightiest being, and you alone wield world-wide sway." Then the sun replied, "Truly my kingdom is vast, but oftentimes, when I would illumine the world, a cloud floats by and covers me. I cannot pierce the cloud; therefore you must go to him if your wish is to be attained."

In no way discouraged, the rats left the sun and came to a cloud as he rested after a flight through the air. The cloud received them less cordially than the sun, and replied to their offer, with a look of mischief in his dusky eyes, "You are mistaken if you think that I am the most powerful being. It is true that I sometimes hide the sun, but I cannot withstand the force of the wind. When he begins to blow I am driven away, and torn in pieces. My strength is not equal to the power of the wind."

A little saddened, the rats, intent on their daughter's future prosperity, waylaid the wind as he swept through a pine forest. He was about to awaken the plain beyond, to stir the grass and the flowers into motion. The two anxious parents made known their mission. This was the whispered reply of the wind: "It is true that I have

strength to drive away the clouds, but I am powerless against the wall which men build to keep me back. You must go to him if you would have the mightiest being in the world for your son-in-law. Indeed I am not so mighty as the wall."

The rats, still persistent in their quest, came to the wall and told their story. The wall answered, "True, I can withstand the wind, but the rat undermines me and makes holes through my very heart. To him you must go if you would wed your daughter to the most powerful being in the world. I cannot overcome the rat."

And now the parent rats returned to their home in the farmstead. Nedzumi, their beautiful daughter with the silken coat and sparkling eyes, rejoiced when she heard that she was to marry one of her own people, for her heart had already been given to a playfellow of the rice fields. They were married, and lived for many years as king and queen of the rat world.

THE PALACE OF THE OCEAN-BED

By Frank Rinder

HO-WORI, Prince Fire-Fade, the son of Ninigi, was a great hunter. He caught "things rough of hair and things soft of hair." His elder brother, Ho-deri, Prince Fire-Flash, was a fisher who caught "things broad of fin and things narrow of fin." But often, when the wind blew and the waves ran high, he would spend hours on the sea and catch no fish. When the Storm God was abroad, Ho-deri had to stay at home, while at nightfall Ho-wori returned laden with spoil from the mountains. Ho-deri spoke to his brother, and said, "I would have your bow and arrows and become a hunter. You shall have my fish-hook." At first Ho-wori would not consent, but finally the exchange was made.

Now Prince Fire-Flash was no hunter. He could not track the game, nor run swiftly, nor take good aim. Day after day Prince Fire-Fade went out to sea. In vain he threw his line; he caught no fish. Moreover, one day, he lost his brother's fish-hook. Then Ho-deri came to Ho-wori, and said, "There is the luck of the mountain and there is the luck of the sea. Let each restore to the other his luck." Ho-wori replied, "I did not catch a single fish with your hook, and now it is lost in the sea."

The elder brother was very angry, and with many hard words demanded the return of his treasure. Prince

Fire-Fade was unhappy. He broke in pieces his good sword and made five hundred fish-hooks, which he offered to his brother. But this did not appease the wrath of Prince Fire-Flash, who still raged and asked for his own hook.

Ho-wori could find neither comfort nor help. He sat one day by the shore and heaved a deep sigh. The old Man of the Sea heard the sigh, and asked the cause of his sorrow. Ho-wori told him of the loss of the fish-hook, and of his brother's displeasure. Thereupon the wise man promised to give his help. He plaited strips of bamboo so tightly together that the water could not pass through, and fashioned therewith a stout little boat. Into this boat Ho-wori jumped, and was carried far out to sea.

After a time, as the old man had foretold, his boat began to sink. Deeper and deeper it sank, until at last he came to a glittering palace of fishes' scales. In front of it was a well, shaded by a great cassia-tree. Prince Fire-Fade sat among the wide-spreading branches. He looked down, and saw a maiden approach the well; in her hand she carried a jeweled bowl. She was the lovely Toyo-tama, Peerless Jewel, the daughter of Wata-tsu-mi, the Sea-King. Ho-wori was spell-bound by her strange wave-like beauty, her long flowing hair, her soft deep-blue eyes. The maiden stooped to fill her bowl. Suddenly, she saw the reflection of Prince Fire-Fade in the water; she dropped the precious bowl, and it fell in a thousand pieces. Toyo-tama hastened to her father, and exclaimed, "A man, with the grace and beauty of a god, sits in the branches of the cassia-tree. I have seen his

THE REFLECTION OF PRINCE FIRE-FADE IN THE WATER

picture in the waters of the well." The Sea-King knew that it must be the great hunter, Prince Fire-Fade.

Then Wata-tsu-mi went forth and stood under the cassia-tree. He looked up to Ho-wori, and said: "Come down, O Son of the Gods, and enter my Palace of the Ocean-Bed." Ho-wori obeyed, and was led into the palace and seated on a throne of sea-asses' skins. A banquet was prepared in his honor. The *hashi* were delicate branches of coral, and the plates were of silvery mother-of-pearl. The clear-rock wine was sipped from cup-shaped ocean blooms with long, slender stalks. Ho-wori thought that never before had there been such a banquet. When it was ended he went with Toyo-tama to the roof of the palace. Dimly, through the blue waters that moved above, he could discern the Sun-Goddess. He saw the mountains and valleys of ocean, the waving forests of tall sea-plants, the homes of the *shaké* and the *kani*.

Ho-wori told Wata-tsu-mi of the loss of the fish-hook. Then the Sea-King called all his subjects together and questioned them. No fish knew aught of the hook, but, said the lobster, "As I sat one day in my crevice among the rocks, the *tai* passed near me. His mouth was swollen, and he went by without giving me greeting." Wata-tsu-mi then noticed that the *tai* had not answered his summons. A messenger, fleet of fin, was sent to fetch him. When the *tai* appeared, the lost fish-hook was found in his poor wounded mouth. It was restored to Ho-wori, and he was happy. Toyo-tama became his bride, and they lived together in the cool fish-scale palace.

Prince Fire-Fade came to understand the secrets of the ocean, the cause of its anger, the cause of its joy. The Storm-Spirit of the upper sea did not rule in the ocean-bed, and night after night Ho-wori was rocked to sleep by the gentle motion of the waters.

Many tides had ebbed and flowed, when, in the quiet of the night, Ho-wori heaved a deep sigh. Toyo-tama was troubled, and told her father that, as Ho-wori dreamt of his home on the earth, a great longing had come over him to visit it once more. Then Wata-tsu-mi gave into Ho-wori's hands two great jewels, the one to rule the flow, the other to rule the ebb of the tide. He spoke thus: "Return to earth on the head of my trusted sea-dragon. Restore the lost fish-hook to Ho-deri. If he is still wroth with you, bring forth the tide-flowing jewel, and the waters shall cover him. If he asks your forgiveness, bring forth the tide-ebbing jewel, and it shall be well with him."

Ho-wori left the Palace of the Ocean-Bed, and was carried swiftly to his own land. As he set foot on the shore, he ungirded his sword, and tied it round the neck of the sea-dragon. Then he said, "Take this to the Sea-King as a token of my love and gratitude."

AUTUMN AND SPRING

By Frank Rinder

A FAIR maiden lay asleep in a rice field. The sun was at its height, and she was weary. Now a god looked down upon the rice field. He knew that the beauty of the maiden came from within, that it mirrored the beauty of heavenly dreams. He knew that even now, as she smiled, she held converse with the spirit of the wind or the flowers.

The god descended and asked the dream-maiden to be his bride. She rejoiced, and they were wed. A wonderful red jewel came of their happiness.

Long, long afterwards, the stone was found by a farmer, who saw that it was a very rare jewel. He prized it highly, and always carried it about with him. Sometimes, as he looked at it in the pale light of the moon, it seemed to him that he could discern two sparkling eyes in its depths. Again, in the stillness of the night, he would awaken and think that a clear soft voice called him by name.

One day, the farmer had to carry the midday meal to his workers in the field. The sun was very hot, so he loaded a cow with the bowls of rice, the millet dumplings, and the beans. Suddenly, Prince Ama-boko stood in the path. He was angry, for he thought that the farmer was about to kill the cow. The Prince would

hear no word of denial; his wrath increased. The farmer became more and more terrified, and, finally, took the precious stone from his pocket and presented it as a peace-offering to the powerful Prince. Ama-boko marveled at the brilliancy of the jewel, and allowed the man to continue his journey.

The Prince returned to his home. He drew forth the treasure, and it was immediately transformed into a goddess of surpassing beauty. Even as she rose before him, he loved her, and ere the moon waned they were wed. The goddess ministered to his every want. She prepared delicate dishes, the secret of which is known only to the gods. She made wine from the juice of a myriad herbs, wine such as mortals never taste.

But, after a time, the Prince became proud and overbearing. He began to treat his faithful wife with cruel contempt. The goddess was sad, and said: "You are not worthy of my love. I will leave you and go to my father." Ama-boko paid no heed to these words, for he did not believe that the threat would be fulfilled. But the beautiful goddess was in earnest. She escaped from the palace and fled to Naniwa, where she is still honored as Akaru-hime, the Goddess of Light.

Now the Prince was wroth when he heard that the goddess had left him, and set out in pursuit of her. But when he neared Naniwa, the gods would not allow his vessel to enter the haven. Then he knew that his priceless red jewel was lost to him forever. He steered his ship towards the north coast of Japan, and landed at Tajima. Here he was well received, and highly esteemed on account of the treasures which he brought with him.

He had costly strings of pearls, girdles of precious stones, and a mirror which the wind and the waves obeyed. Prince Ama-boko remained at Tajima, and was the father of a mighty race.

Among his children's children was a princess so renowned for her beauty that eighty suitors sought her hand. One after the other returned sorrowfully home, for none found favor in her eyes. At last, two brothers came before her, the young God of the Autumn, and the young God of the Spring. The elder of the two, the God of Autumn, first urged his suit. But the princess refused him. He went to his younger brother and said, "The princess does not love me, neither will you be able to win her heart."

But the Spring God was full of hope, and replied, "I will give you a cask of rice wine if I do not win her, but if she consents to be my bride, you shall give a cask of *saké* to me."

Now the God of Spring went to his mother, and told her all. She promised to aid him. Thereupon she wove, in a single night, a robe and sandals from the unopened buds of the lilac and white wistaria. Out of the same delicate flowers she fashioned a bow and arrows. Thus clad, the God of Spring made his way to the beautiful princess.

As he stepped before the maiden, every bud unfolded, and from the heart of each blossom came a fragrance that filled the air. The princess was overjoyed, and gave her hand to the God of the Spring.

The elder brother, the God of Autumn, was filled with rage when he heard how his brother had obtained

the wondrous robe. He refused to give the promised cask of *saké*. When the mother learned that the god had broken his word, she placed stones and salt in the hollow of a bamboo cane, wrapped it round with bamboo leaves, and hung it in the smoke. Then she uttered a curse upon her first-born son: "As the leaves wither and fade, so must you. As the salt sea ebbs, so must you. As the stone sinks, so must you."

The terrible curse fell upon her son. While the God of Spring remains ever young, ever fragrant, ever full of mirth, the God of Autumn is old, and withered, and sad.

THE VISION OF TSUNU

By Frank Rinder

WHEN the five tall pine-trees on the windy heights of Mionoseki were but tiny shoots, there lived in the Kingdom of the Islands a pious man. His home was in a remote hamlet surrounded by mountains and great forests of pine. Tsunu had a wife and sons and daughters. He was a woodman, and his days were spent in the forest and on the hillsides. In summer he was up at cock-crow, and worked patiently, in the soft light under the pines, until nightfall. Then, with his burden of logs and branches, he went slowly homeward. After the evening meal, he would tell some old story or legend. Tsunu was never weary of relating the wondrous tales of the Land of the Gods. Best of all he loved to speak of Fuji-yama, the mountain that stood so near his home.

In times gone by, there was no mountain where now the sacred peak reaches up to the sky; only a far-stretching plain bathed in sunlight all day. The peasants in the district were astonished, one morning, to behold a mighty hill where before had been the open plain. It had sprung up in a single night, while they slept. Flames and huge stones were hurled from its summit; the peasants feared that the demons from the under-world had come to wreak vengeance upon them.

But for many generations there have been peace and silence on the heights. The good Sun-Goddess loves Fuji-yama. Every evening she lingers on his summit, and when at last she leaves him, his lofty crest is bathed in soft purple light. In the evening the Matchless Mountain seems to rise higher and higher into the skies, until no mortal can tell the place of his rest. Golden clouds enfold Fuji-yama in the early morning. Pilgrims come from far and near, to gain blessing and health for themselves and their families from the sacred mountain.

On the self-same night that Fuji-yama rose out of the earth, a strange thing happened in the mountainous district near Kyōto. The inhabitants were awakened by a terrible roar, which continued throughout the night. In the morning every mountain had disappeared; not one of the hills that they loved was to be seen. A blue lake lay before them. It was none other than the lute-shaped Lake Biwa. The mountains had, in truth, traveled under the earth for more than a hundred miles, and now form the sacred Fuji-yama.

As Tsunu stepped out of his hut in the morning, his eyes sought the Mountain of the Gods. He saw the golden clouds, and the beautiful story was in his mind as he went to his work.

One day the woodman wandered farther than usual into the forest. At noon he was in a very lonely spot. The air was soft and sweet, the sky so blue that he looked long at it, and then took a deep breath. Tsunu was happy.

Now his eye fell on a little fox who watched him

curiously from the bushes. The creature ran away when it saw that the man's attention had been attracted. Tsunu thought, "I will follow the little fox and see where she goes." Off he started in pursuit. He soon came to a bamboo thicket. The smooth, slender stems waved dreamily, the pale green leaves still sparkled with the morning dew. But it was not this which caused the woodman to stand spellbound. On a plot of mossy grass beyond the thicket, sat two maidens of surpassing beauty. They were partly shaded by the waving bamboos, but their faces were lit up by the sunlight. Not a word came from their lips, yet Tsunu knew that the voices of both must be sweet as the cooing of the wild dove. The maidens were graceful as the slender willow, they were fair as the blossom of the cherry-tree. Slowly they moved the chessmen which lay before them on the grass. Tsunu hardly dared to breathe, lest he should disturb them. The breeze caught their long hair, the sunlight played upon it. . . . The sun still shone. . . . The chessmen were still slowly moved to and fro. . . . The woodman gazed enraptured.

"But now," thought Tsunu, "I must return, and tell those at home of the beautiful maidens." Alas, his knees were stiff and weak. "Surely I have stood here for many hours," he said. He leaned for support upon his axe; it crumbled into dust. Looking down he saw that a flowing white beard hung from his chin.

For many hours the poor woodman tried in vain to reach his home. Fatigued and wearied, he came at last

to a hut. But all was changed. Strange faces peered curiously at him. The speech of the people was unfamiliar. "Where are my wife and my children?" he cried. But no one knew his name.

Finally, the poor woodman came to understand that seven generations had passed since he bade farewell to his dear ones in the early morning. While he had gazed at the beautiful maidens his wife, his children, and his children's children had lived and died.

The few remaining years of Tsunu's life were spent as a pious pilgrim to Fuji-yama, his well-loved mountain.

Since his death he has been honored as a saint who brings prosperity to the people of his native country.

RAI-TARO, THE SON OF THE THUNDER-GOD

By Frank Rinder

AT the foot of the snowy mountain of Haku-san, in the province of Echizen, lived a peasant and his wife. They were very poor, for their little strip of barren mountain land yielded but one scanty crop a year, while their neighbors in the valley gathered two rich harvests. With unceasing patience Bimbo worked from cock-crow until the barking of the foxes warned him that night had fallen. He laid out his plot of ground in terraces, surrounding them with dams, and diverted the course of the mountain stream that it might flood his fields. But when no rain came to swell the brook, Bimbo's harvest failed. Often as he sat in his hut with his wife, after a long day of hard work, he would speak of their troubles. The peasants were filled with grief that a child had not been given to them. They longed to adopt a son, but, as they had barely enough for their own simple wants, the dream could not be realized.

An evil day came when the land of Echizen was parched. No rain fell. The brook was dried up. The young rice-sprouts withered. Bimbo sighed heavily over his work. He looked up to the sky and entreated the gods to take pity on him.

After many weeks of sunshine, the sky was over-

cast. Single clouds came up rapidly from the west, and gathered in angry masses. A strange silence filled the air. Even the voice of the cicadas, who had chirped in the trees during the heat of the day, was stilled. Only the cry of the mountain hawk was audible. A murmur passed over valley and hill, a faint rustling of leaves, a whispering sigh in the needles of the fir. Fu-ten, the Storm-Spirit, and Rai-den, the Thunder-God, were abroad. Deeper and deeper sank the clouds under the weight of the thunder dragon. The rain came at first in large cool drops, then in torrents.

Bimbo rejoiced, and worked steadily to strengthen the dams and open the conduits of his farm.

A vivid flash of lightning, a mighty roar of thunder! Terrified, almost blinded, Bimbo fell on his knees. He thought that the claws of the thunder-dragon were about him. But he was unharmed, and he offered thanks to Kwan-non, the Goddess of Pity, who protects mortals from the wrath of the Thunder-God. On the spot where the lightning struck the ground, lay a little rosy boy full of life, who held out his arms and lisped. Bimbo was greatly amazed, and his heart was glad, for he knew that the gods had heard and answered his never-uttered prayer. The happy peasant took the child up, and carried him under his rice-straw coat to the hut. He called to his wife, "Rejoice, our wish is fulfilled. The gods have sent us a child. We will call him Rai-taro, the Son of the Thunder-God, and bring him up as our own."

The good woman fondly tended the boy. Rai-taro loved his foster-parents, and grew up dutiful and obedient. He did not care to play with other children,

but was always happy to work in the fields with Bimbo, where he would watch the flight of the birds, and listen to the sound of the wind. Long before Bimbo could discern any sign of an approaching storm, Rai-taro knew that it was at hand. When it drew near, he fixed his eyes intently on the gathering clouds, he listened eagerly to the roll of the thunder, the rush of the rain, and he greeted each flash of lightning with a shout of joy.

Rai-taro had come as a ray of sunshine into the lives of the poor peasants. Good fortune followed the farmer from the day that he carried the little boy home in his rain-coat. The mountain stream was never dry. The land was fertile, and he gathered rich harvests of rice and abundant crops of millet. Year by year, his prosperity increased, until from Bimbo, "the poor," he became Kanemochi, "the prosperous."

About eighteen summers passed, and Rai-taro still lived with his foster-parents. Suddenly, they knew not why, he became thoughtful and sad. Nothing would rouse him. The peasants determined to hold a feast in honor of his birthday. They called together the neighbors, and there was much rejoicing. Bimbo told many tales of other days, and, finally, of how Rai-taro came to him out of the storm. As he ceased, a strange far-off look was in the eyes of the Son of the Thunder-God. He stood before his foster-parents, and said: "You have loved me well. You have been faithful and kind. But the time has come for me to leave you. Farewell."

In a moment Rai-taro was gone. A white cloud floated

upward towards the heights of Haku-san. As it neared the summit of the mountain, it took the form of a white dragon. Higher still the dragon soared, until, at last, it vanished into a castle of clouds.

The peasants looked wistfully up to the sky. They hoped that Rai-taro might return, but he had joined his father, Rai-den, the Thunder-God, and was seen no more.

THE STAR-LOVERS

By Frank Rinder

SHOKUJO, daughter of the Sun, dwelt with her father on the banks of the Silver River of Heaven, which we call the Milky Way. She was a lovely maiden, graceful and winsome, and her eyes were tender as the eyes of a dove. Her loving father, the Sun, was much troubled because Shokujo did not share in the youthful pleasures of the daughters of the air. A soft melancholy seemed to brood over her, but she never wearied of working for the good of others, and especially did she busy herself at her loom; indeed she came to be called the Weaving Princess.

The Sun bethought him that if he could give his daughter in marriage, all would be well; her dormant love would be kindled into a flame that would illumine her whole being and drive out the pensive spirit which oppressed her. Now there lived, hard by, one Kingen, a right honest herdsman, who tended his cows on the borders of the Heavenly Stream. The Sun-King proposed to bestow his daughter on Kingen, thinking in this way to provide for her happiness and at the same time keep her near him. Every star beamed approval, and there was joy in the heavens.

The love that bound Shokujo and Kingen to one another was a great love. With its awakening, Shokujo forsook her former occupations, nor did she any

longer labor industriously at the loom, but laughed, and danced, and sang, and made merry from morn till night. The Sun-King was sorely grieved, for he had not foreseen so great a change. Anger was in his eyes, and he said, "Kingen is surely the cause of this, therefore I will banish him to the other side of the River of Stars."

When Shokujo and Kingen heard that they were to be parted, and could thenceforth, in accordance with the King's decree, meet but once a year, and that upon the seventh night of the seventh month, their hearts were heavy. The leave-taking between them was a sad one, and great tears stood in Shokujo's eyes as she bade farewell to her lover-husband. In answer to the behest of the Sun-King, myriads of magpies flocked together, and, outspreading their wings, formed a bridge on which Kingen crossed the River of Heaven. The moment that his foot touched the opposite bank, the birds dispersed with noisy chatter, leaving poor Kingen a solitary exile. He looked wistfully towards the weeping figure of Shokujo, who stood on the threshold of her now desolate home.

Long and weary were the succeeding days, spent as they were by Kingen in guiding his oxen and by Shokujo in plying her shuttle. The Sun-King was gladdened by his daughter's industry. When night fell and the heavens were bright with countless lights, the lovers were wont, standing on the banks of the celestial stream, to waft across it sweet and tender messages, while each uttered a prayer for the speedy coming of the wondrous night.

The long-hoped-for month and day drew nigh, and the hearts of the lovers were troubled lest rain should fall; for the Silver River, full at all times, is at that season often in flood, and the bird-bridge might be swept away.

The day broke cloudlessly bright. It waxed and waned, and one by one the lamps of heaven were lighted. At nightfall the magpies assembled, and Shokujo, quivering with delight, crossed the slender bridge and fell into the arms of her lover. Their transport of joy was as the joy of the parched flower, when the raindrop falls upon it; but the moment of parting soon came, and Shokujo sorrowfully retraced her steps.

Year follows year, and the lovers still meet in that far-off starry land on the seventh night of the seventh month, save when rain has swelled the Silver River and rendered the crossing impossible. The hope of a permanent reunion still fills the hearts of the Star-Lovers, and is to them as a sweet fragrance and a beautiful vision.

THE CHILD OF THE FOREST

By Frank Rinder

SAKATO-NO-TOKI-YUKI was a brave warrior at the court of Kyōto. He fought for the Minamoto against the Taira, but the Minamoto were defeated, and Sakato's last days were spent as a wandering exile. He died of a broken heart. His widow, the daughter of a noble house, escaped from Kyōto, and fled eastward to the rugged Ashigara Mountains. No one knew of her hiding-place, and she had no enemies to fear save the wild beasts who lived in the forest. At night she found shelter in a rocky cave.

A son was born to her whom she named Kintaro, the Golden Boy. He was a sturdy little fellow, with ruddy cheeks and merry, laughing eyes. Even as he lay crowing in his bed among the fern, the birds that alighted on his shoulder peeped trustfully into his eyes, and he smiled. Thus early the child and the birds were comrades. The butterfly and the downy moth would settle upon his breast, and tread softly over his little brown body.

Kintaro was not as other children, — there was something strange about him. When he fell, he would laugh cheerily; if he wandered far into the wood, he could always find his way home; and, when little more than a chubby babe, he could swing a heavy

axe in circles round his head. In the remote hills he had no human companions, but the animals were his constant playfellows. He was gentle and kind-hearted and would not willingly hurt any living creature; therefore it was that the birds and all the forest people looked upon Kintaro as one of themselves.

Among Kintaro's truest friends were the bears who dwelt in the woods. A mother bear often carried him on her back to her home. The cubs ran out and greeted him joyfully, and they romped and played together for hours. They wrestled and strove in friendly rivalry. Sometimes Kintaro would clamber up the smooth-barked monkey-tree, sit on the topmost branch, and laugh at the vain attempts of the shaggy little fellows to follow him. Then came supper-time and the feast of liquid honey.

But the Golden Boy loved best of all to fly through the air with his arms round the neck of a gentle-eyed stag. Soon after dawn, the deer came to awaken the sleeper, and, with a farewell kiss to his mother and a morning caress to the stag, Kintaro sprang on his back and was carried, with swift bounds, up mountain-side, through valley and thicket, until the sun was high in the heavens. When they came to a leafy spot in the woods and heard the sound of falling water, the stag grazed among the high fern while Kintaro bathed in the foaming torrent.

Thus mother and son lived securely in their home among the mountains. They saw no human being save the few woodcutters who penetrated thus far into the forest, and these simple peasants did not

guess their noble birth. The mother was known as Yama-uba-San, "The Wild Nurse of the Mountain," and her son as "Little Wonder."

Kintaro reigned as prince of the forest, beloved of every living creature. When he held his court, the bear and the wolf, the fox and the badger, the marten and the squirrel, and many other courtiers were seated around him. The birds, too, flocked at his call. The eagle and the hawk flew down from the distant heights; the crane and the heron swept over the plain, and feathered friends without number thronged the branches of the cedars. He listened as they told of their joys and their sorrows, and spoke graciously to all, for Kintaro had learned the language and lore of the beasts, and the birds, and the flowers from the Tengus, the wood-elves.

The Tengus, who live in the rocky heights of the mountains and in the topmost branches of lofty trees, befriended Kintaro and became his teachers. As he was truthful and good, he had nothing to fear from them; but the Tengus are dreaded by deceitful boys, whose tongues they pull out by their roots and carry away.

These elves are strange beings, with the body of a man, the head of a hawk, long, long noses, and two powerful claws on their hairy hands and feet. They are hatched from eggs, and in their youth have feathers and wings; later they molt and wear the garb of men. On their feet are stilt-like clogs about twelve inches high. They stalk proudly along with crossed arms, head thrown back, and long nose held high in the air; hence the proverb, "He has become a Tengu."

The headquarters of the tribe are in the Ōyama

KINTARO REIGNED AS PRINCE OF THE FOREST

Mountain, where lives the Dai-Tengu, their leader, whom all obey. He is even more proud and overbearing than his followers, and his nose is so long that one of his ministers always precedes him that it may not be injured. A long gray beard reaches to his girdle, and mustaches hang from his mouth to his chin. His sceptre is a fan of seven feathers, which he carries in his left hand. He rarely speaks, and is thus accounted wondrous wise. The Raven-Tengu is his chief minister; instead of a nose and mouth, he has a long beak. Over the left shoulder is slung an executioner's axe, and in his hand he bears the book of Tengu wisdom.

The Tengus are fond of games, and their long noses are useful in many ways. They serve as swords for fencing, and as poles on the point of which to balance bowls of water with gold-fish. Two noses joined together form a tight-rope on which a young Tengu, sheltered by a paper umbrella and leading a little dog, dances and jumps through hoops; the while an old Tengu sings a dance-tune and another beats time with a fan. Some among the older Tengus are very wise. The most famous of all is he who dwells on the Kurama Mountain, but hardly less wise is the Tengu who undertook the education of Kintaro. At nightfall he carried the boy to the nest in the high rocks. Here he was taught the wisdom of the elves, and the speech of all the forest tribes.

One day, Little Wonder was at play with some young Tengus, but they grew tired and flew up to their nest, leaving Kintaro alone. He was angry with

them, and shook the tree with all his strength, so that the nest fell to the ground. The mother soon returned, and was in great distress at the loss of her children. Kintaro's kind heart was touched, and, with the little ones in his arms, he swarmed up the tree and asked pardon. Happily they were unhurt, and soon recovered from their fright. Kintaro helped to rebuild the nest, and brought presents to his playfellows.

Now it happened that, as the hero Raiko, who had fought so bravely against the *oni*, passed through the forest, he came upon Little Wonder wrestling with a powerful bear. An admiring circle of friends stood around. Raiko, as he looked, was amazed at the strength and courage of the boy. The combat over, he asked Kintaro his name and his story, but the child could only lead him to his mother. When she learned that the man before her was indeed Raiko, the mighty warrior, she told him of her flight from Kyōto, of the birth of Kintaro, and of their secluded life among the mountains. Raiko wished to take the boy away and train him in arms, but Kintaro loved the forest. When, however, his mother spoke, he was ready to obey. He called together his friends, the beasts and the birds, and, in words that are remembered to this day, bade them all farewell.

The mother would not follow her son to the land of men, but Kintaro, when he became a great hero, often came to see her in the home of his childhood.

The peasants of the Ashigara still tell of The Wild Nurse of the Mountains and Little Wonder.

MYTHS OF THE SLAVS

THE PRINCE WITH THE GOLDEN HAND

By Alex. Chodsko

(Translated by Emily J. Harding.)

THERE once lived a king and queen who had an only daughter. And the beauty of this princess surpassed everything seen or heard of. Her forehead was brilliant as the moon, her lips like the rose, her complexion had the delicacy of the lily, and her breath the sweetness of jessamine. Her hair was golden, and in her voice and glance there was something so enchanting that none could help listening to her or looking at her.

The princess lived for seventeen years in her own rooms, rejoicing the heart of her parents, teachers, and servants. No one else ever saw her, for the sons of the king and all other princes were forbidden to enter her rooms. She never went anywhere, never looked upon the outside world, and never breathed the outer air, but she was perfectly happy.

When she was eighteen it happened, either by chance or by the will of fate, that she heard the cry of the cuckoo. This sound made her strangely uneasy; her golden head drooped, and covering her eyes with her hands, she fell into thought so deep as not to hear her

mother enter. The queen looked at her anxiously, and after comforting her went to tell the king about it.

For many years past the sons of kings and neighboring princes had, either personally or by their ambassadors, presented themselves at court to ask the king for the hand of his daughter in marriage. But he had always bidden them wait until another time. Now, after a long consultation with the queen, he sent messengers to foreign courts and elsewhere to proclaim that the princess, in accordance with the wishes of her parents, was about to choose a husband, and that the man of her choice would also have the right of succession to the throne.

When the princess heard of this decision her joy was very great, and for days she would dream about it. Then she looked out into the garden through the golden lattice of her window, and longed with an irresistible longing to walk in the open air upon the smooth lawn. With great difficulty she at last persuaded her governesses to allow her to do so, they agreeing on condition that she should keep with them. So the crystal doors were thrown open, the oaken gates that shut in the orchard turned on their hinges, and the princess found herself on the green grass. She ran about, picking the sweet-scented flowers and chasing the many-colored butterflies. But she could not have been a very prudent maiden, for she wandered away from her governesses, with her face uncovered.

Just at that moment a raging hurricane, such as had never been seen or heard before, passed by and fell upon the garden. It roared and whistled round and

round, then seizing the princess carried her far away. The terrified governesses wrung their hands, and were for a time speechless with grief. At last they rushed into the palace, and throwing themselves on their knees before the king and queen, told them with sobs and tears what had happened. They were overwhelmed with sorrow and knew not what to do.

By this time quite a crowd of princes had arrived at the palace, and seeing the king in such bitter grief, inquired the reason of it.

"Sorrow has touched my white hairs," said the king. "The hurricane has carried off my dearly beloved child, the sweet Princess with the Golden Hair, and I know not where it has taken her. Whoever finds this out, and brings her back to me, shall have her for his wife, and with her half my kingdom for a wedding present, and the remainder of my wealth and titles after my death."

After hearing these words, princes and knights mounted their horses and set off to search throughout the world for the beautiful Princess with the Golden Hair, who had been carried away by Vikher.

Now among the seekers were two brothers, sons of a king, and they traveled together through many countries asking for news of the princess, but no one knew anything about her. But they continued their search, and at the end of two years arrived in a country that lies in the centre of the earth, and has summer and winter at the same time.

The princes determined to find out whether this was the place where the hurricane had hidden the Princess

with the Golden Hair. So they began to ascend one of the mountains on foot, leaving their horses behind them to feed on the grass. On reaching the top, they came in sight of a silver palace supported on a cock's foot, while at one of the windows the sun's rays shone upon a head of golden hair; surely it could only belong to the princess. Suddenly the north wind blew so violently, and the cold became so intense, that the leaves of the trees withered and the breath froze. The two princes tried to keep their footing, and battled manfully against the storm, but they were overcome by its fierceness and fell together, frozen to death.

Their broken-hearted parents waited for them in vain. Masses were said, charities distributed, and prayers sent up to God to pity them in their sorrow.

One day when the queen, the mother of the princes, was giving a poor old man some money, she said to him, "My good old friend, pray God to guard our sons and soon bring them back in good health."

"Ah, noble lady," answered he, "that prayer would be useless. Everlasting rest is all one may ask for the dead, but in return for the love you have shown and the money you have given the poor and needy, I am charged with this message — that God has taken pity on your sorrow, and that ere long you will be the mother of a son, the like of whom has never yet been seen."

The old man, having spoken thus, vanished.

The queen, whose tears were falling, felt a strange joy enter her heart, and a feeling of happiness steal over her, as she went to the king and repeated the old man's words. And so it came to pass, for a week or

two later God sent her a son, and he was in no way like an ordinary child. His eyes resembled those of a falcon, and his eyebrows the sable's fur. His right hand was of pure gold, and his manner and appearance were so full of an indescribable majesty, that he was looked upon by every one with a feeling of awe.

His growth, too, was not like that of other children. When but three days old, he stepped out of his swaddling-clothes and left his cradle. And he was so strong that when his parents entered the room he ran towards them, crying out, "Good-morning, dear parents, why are you so sad? Are you not happy at the sight of me?"

"We are indeed happy, dear child, and we thank God for having sent us you in our great grief. But we cannot forget your two brothers; they were so handsome and brave, and worthy of a great destiny. And our sadness is increased when we remember that, instead of resting in their own country in the tomb of their forefathers, they sleep in an unknown land, perhaps without burial. Alas! it is three years since we had news of them."

At these words the child's tears fell, and he embraced his parents and said, "Weep no more, dear parents, —you shall soon be comforted; for before next spring I shall be a strong young man, and will look for my brothers all over the world. And I will bring them back to you, if not alive, yet dead; ay, though I have to seek them in the very centre of the earth."

At these words and at that which followed the king and queen were amazed. For the strange child, guided as it were by an invisible hand, rushed into the garden,

and in spite of the cold, for it was not yet daylight, bathed in the early dew. When the sun had risen he threw himself down near a little wood on the fine sand, rubbed and rolled himself in it, and returned home, no longer a child but a youth.

It was pleasant to the king to see his son thrive in this way, and indeed the young prince was the handsomest in the whole land. He grew from hour to hour. At the end of a month he could wield a sword, in two months he rode on horseback, in three months he had grown a beautiful mustache of pure gold. Then he put on a helmet, and presenting himself before the king and queen, said, "My much honored parents, your son asks your blessing. I am no longer a child, and now go to seek my brothers. In order to find them I will, if necessary, go to the farthest ends of the world."

"Ah, do not venture. Stay rather with us, dear son; you are still too young to be exposed to the risks of such an undertaking."

"Adventures have no terrors for me," replied the young hero. "I trust in God. Why should I for a moment hesitate to face these dangers? Whatever Destiny has in store for us will happen, whatever we may do to try to prevent it."

So they agreed to let him go. Weeping they bade him farewell, blessing him and the road he was to travel.

A pleasant tale is soon told, but events do not pass so quickly.

The young prince crossed deep rivers and climbed high mountains, till he came to a dark forest. In the distance he saw a cottage supported on a cock's foot,

and standing in the midst of a field full of poppies. As he made his way towards it he was suddenly seized by an overpowering longing to sleep, but he urged on his horse, and breaking off the poppy heads as he galloped through the field, came up close to the house. Then he called out: —

"Little cot, turn around, on thy foot turn thou free;
To the forest set thy back, let the door be wide to me."

The cottage turned round with a great creaking noise, the door facing the prince. He entered, and found an old woman with thin white hair and a face covered with wrinkles, truly frightful to look upon. She was sitting at a table, her head resting on her hands, her eyes fixed on the ceiling, lost in deep thought. Near her were two beautiful girls, their complexions like lilies and roses, and in every way sweet to the eye.

"Ah, how do you do, Prince with Mustache of Gold, Hero with the Golden Fist?" said old Yaga, "What has brought you here?"

Having told her the object of his journey, she replied, "Your elder brothers perished on the mountain that touches the clouds, while in search of the Princess with the Golden Hair, who was carried off by Vikher, the hurricane."

"And how is this thief Vikher to be got at?" asked the prince.

"Ah, my dear child, he would swallow you like a fly. It is now a hundred years since I went outside this cottage, for fear Vikher should seize me and carry me off to his palace near the sky."

"I am not afraid of his carrying me off, — I am not handsome enough for that; and he will not swallow me either, for my golden hand can smash anything."

"Then if you are not afraid, my dove, I will help you to the best of my power. But give me your word of honor that you will bring me some of the Water of Youth, for it restores even to the most aged the beauty and freshness of youth."

"I give you my word of honor that I will bring you some."

"This, then, is what you must do. I will give you a pin-cushion for a guide; this you throw in front of you, and follow whithersoever it goes. It will lead you to the mountain that touches the clouds, and which is guarded in Vikher's absence by his father and mother, the northern blast and the south wind. On no account lose sight of the pin-cushion. If attacked by the father, the northern blast, and suddenly seized with cold, then put on this heat-giving hood; if overpowered by burning heat of the south wind, then drink from this cooling flagon. Thus by means of the pin-cushion, the hood, and the flagon you will reach the top of the mountain where the Princess with the Golden Hair is imprisoned. Deal with Vikher as you will, only remember to bring me some of the Water of Youth."

Our young hero took the heat-giving hood, the cooling flagon, and the pin-cushion, and, after bidding farewell to old Yaga and her two pretty daughters, mounted his steed and rode off, following the pin-cushion, which rolled before him at a great rate.

Now a beautiful story is soon told, but the events

of which it consists do not in real life take place so rapidly.

When the prince had traveled through two kingdoms, he came to a land in which lay a very beautiful valley that stretched into the far distance, and above it towered the mountain that touches the sky. The summit was so high above the earth you might almost fancy it reached the moon.

The prince dismounted, left his horse to graze, and having crossed himself began to follow the pin-cushion up steep and rocky paths. When he had got half-way there the north wind began to blow, and the cold was so intense that the wood of the trees split up and the breath froze; he felt chilled to the heart. But he quickly put on the heat-giving hood, and cried: —

"O Heat-Giving Hood, see I fly now to thee,
Lend me quickly thine aid;
O hasten to warm ere the cold has killed me;
With thee I'm not afraid."

The northern blast blew with redoubled fury, but to no purpose. For the prince was so hot that he streamed with perspiration, and indeed was obliged to unbutton his coat and fan himself.

Here the pin-cushion stopped upon a small snow-covered mound. The prince cleared away the snow, beneath which lay the frozen bodies of two young men, and he knew them to be those of his lost brothers. Having knelt beside them and prayed, he turned to follow the pin-cushion, which had already started, and was rolling ever higher and higher. On reaching the top of the mountain he saw a silver palace sup-

ported on a cock's foot, and at one of the windows, shining in the sun's rays, a head of golden hair which could belong to no one but the princess. Suddenly a hot wind began to blow from the south, and the heat became so intense that leaves withered and dropped from the trees, the grass dried up, and large cracks appeared in several places of the earth's surface. Thirst, heat, and weariness began to tell upon the young prince, so he took the cooling flagon from his pocket and cried: —

"Flagon, bring me quick relief
From this parching heat;
In thy draught I have belief,
Coolness it will mete."

After drinking deeply he felt stronger than ever, and so continued to ascend. Not only was he relieved from the great heat, but was even obliged to button up his coat to keep himself warm.

The pin-cushion still led the way, ever climbing higher and higher, while the prince followed close behind. After crossing the region of clouds they came to the topmost peak of the mountain. Here the prince came close to the palace, which can only be likened to a dream of perfect beauty. It was supported on a cock's foot, and was built entirely of silver, except for its steel gates and roof of solid gold. Before the entrance was a deep precipice over which none but the birds could pass. As the prince gazed upon the splendid building, the princess leaned out of one of the windows, and, seeing him, light shone from her sparkling eyes, her lovely hair floated in the wind,

and the scent of her sweet breath filled the air. The prince sprang forward and cried out: —

"Silver Palace, oh turn, on thy foot turn thou free,
To the steep rocks thy back, but thy doors wide to me."

At these words it revolved, creaking, the doorway facing the prince. As he entered, it returned to its original position. The prince went through the palace till he came to a room bright as the sun itself, and the walls, floor, and ceiling of which consisted of mirrors. He was filled with wonder, for instead of one princess he saw twelve, all equally beautiful, with the same graceful movements and golden hair. But eleven were only reflections of the one real princess. She gave a cry of joy on seeing him, and running to meet him said: "Ah, noble sir, you look like a delivering angel. Surely you bring me good news. From what family, city, or country have you come? Perhaps my dear father and mother sent you in search of me?"

"No one has sent me. I have come of my own free will to rescue you and restore you to your parents."

When he had told her all that had passed, she said, "Your devotion, prince, is very great; may God bless your attempt. But Vikher the hurricane is unconquerable, so, if life be dear to you, fly. Leave this place before his return, which I expect every minute; he will kill you with one glance of his eyes."

"If I should not succeed in saving you, sweet princess, life can be no longer dear to me. But I am full of hope, and I beg you first to give me some of the Strength-Giving Water from the Heroic Well, for this is drunk by the hurricane."

The princess drew a bucketful of water, which the young man emptied at one draught and then asked for another. This astonished her somewhat, but she gave it to him, and when he had drunk it he said, "Allow me, princess, to sit down for a moment to take breath."

She gave him an iron chair, but as soon as he sat down it broke into a thousand pieces. She then brought him the chair used by Vikher himself; but although it was made of the strongest steel, it bent and creaked beneath the prince's weight.

"Now you see," said he, "that I have grown heavier than your unconquerable hurricane: so take courage, with God's help and your good wishes I shall overcome him. In the mean time tell me how you pass your time here."

"Alas! in bitter tears and sad reflections. My only consolation is that I have been able to keep my persecutor at a distance, for he vainly implores me to marry him. Two years have now passed away, and yet none of his efforts to win my consent have been successful. Last time he went away he told me that if on his return he had not guessed the riddles I set him (the correct explanation of these being the condition I have made for his marrying me), he would set them aside, and marry me in spite of my objections."

"Ah, then I am just in time. I will be the priest on that occasion, and give him Death for a bride."

At that moment a horrible whistling was heard.

"Be on your guard, prince," cried she, "here comes the hurricane."

The palace spun rapidly round, fearful sounds filled the building, thousands of ravens and birds of ill omen croaked loudly and flapped their wings, and all the doors opened with a tremendous noise.

Vikher, mounted on his winged horse that breathed fire, leapt into the mirrored room, then stopped amazed at the sight before him. He was indeed the hurricane, with the body of a giant and the head of a dragon, and as he gazed his horse pranced and beat his wings.

"What is your business here, stranger?" he shouted, and the sound of his voice was like unto a lion's roar.

"I am your enemy, and I want your blood," replied the prince calmly.

"Your boldness amuses me. At the same time, if you do not depart at once I will take you in my left hand and crush every bone in your body with my right."

"Try, if you dare, woman-stealer!" he answered.

Vikher roared, breathing fire in his rage, and with his mouth wide open threw himself upon the prince, intending to swallow him. But the latter stepped lightly aside, and putting his golden hand down his enemy's throat, seized him by the tongue and dashed him against the wall with such force that the monster bounded against it like a ball, and died within a few moments, shedding torrents of blood.

The prince then drew from different springs the water that *restores*, that *revives*, and that *makes young*, and taking the unconscious girl in his arms he led the winged horse to the door and said: —

"Silver Palace, oh, turn, on thy foot turn thou free,
To the steep rocks thy back, but thy doors wide to me."

Whereupon the palace creaked round on the cock's foot, and the door opened on the courtyard. Mounting the horse, he placed the princess before him, for she had by this time recovered from her swoon, and cried:

"Fiery Horse with strength of wing,
I am now your lord;
Do my will in everything,
Be your law my word.
Where I point there you must go
At once, at once. The way you know."

And he pointed to the place where his brothers lay frozen in death. The horse rose, pranced, beat the air with his wings, then, lifting himself high in the air, came down gently where the two princes were lying. The Prince with the Golden Hand sprinkled their bodies with the Life-Restoring Water, and instantly the pallor of death disappeared, leaving in its place the natural color. He then sprinkled them with the Water that Revives, after which they opened their eyes, got up, and looking round said, "How well we have slept! But what has happened? And how is it we see the lovely princess we sought in the society of a young man, a perfect stranger to us?"

The Prince with the Golden Hand explained everything, embraced his brothers tenderly, and taking them with him on his horse, showed the latter that he wished to go in the direction of Yaga's cottage. The horse rose up, pranced, lifted himself in the air, then, beating his wings far above the highest forests, descended close by the cottage. The prince said:—

"Little cot, turn around, on thy foot turn thou free,
To the forest thy back, but thy door wide to me."

The cottage began to creak without delay, and turned round with the door facing the travelers. Old Yaga was on the lookout, and came to meet them. As soon as she got the Water of Youth she sprinkled herself with it, and instantly everything about her that was old and ugly became young and charming. So pleased was she to be young again that she kissed the prince's hands and said, "Ask of me anything you like, I will refuse you nothing."

At that moment her two beautiful young daughters happened to look out of the window; upon which the two elder princes, who were admiring them, said, "Will you give us your daughters for wives?"

"That I will, with pleasure," said she, and beckoned them to her. Then courtesying to her future sons-in-law, she laughed merrily and vanished. They placed their brides before them on the same horse, while the Prince with the Golden Hand, pointing to where he wished to go, said:—

"Fiery Horse with strength of wing,
I am now your lord;
Do my will in everything,
Be your law my word.
Where I point there you must go
At once, at once. The way you know."

The horse rose up, pranced, flapped his wings, and flew far above the forest. An hour or two later he descended before the palace of the Golden-Haired Princess's parents. When the king and queen saw their only daughter who had so long been lost to them, they ran to meet her with exclamations of joy and kissed her gratefully and lovingly, at the same time thanking the

prince who had restored her to them. And when they heard the story of his adventures they said, "You, Prince with the Golden Hand, shall receive our beloved daughter in marriage, with the half of our kingdom, and the right of succession to the remainder after us. Let us, too, add to the joy of this day by celebrating the weddings of your two brothers."

The Princess with the Golden Hair kissed her father lovingly and said, "My much honored and noble sire and lord, the prince my bridegroom knows of the vow I made when carried off by the hurricane, that I would only give my hand to him who could answer aright my six enigmas: it would be impossible for the Princess with the Golden Hair to break her word."

The king was silent, but the prince said, "Speak, sweet princess, I am listening."

"This is my first riddle: 'Two of my extremities form a sharp point, the two others a ring; in my centre is a screw.'"

"A pair of scissors," answered he.

"Well guessed. This is the second: 'I make the round of the table on only one foot, but if I am wounded the evil is beyond repair.'"

"A glass of wine."

"Right. This is the third: 'I have no tongue, and yet I answer faithfully; I am not seen, yet every one hears me.'"

"An echo."

"True. This is the fourth: 'Fire cannot light me; brush cannot sweep me; no painter can paint me; no hiding-place secure me.'"

"Sunshine."

"The very thing. This is the fifth: 'I existed before the creation of Adam. I am always changing in succession the two colors of my dress. Thousands of years have gone by, but I have remained unaltered both in color and form.'"

"It must be time, including day and night."

"You have succeeded in guessing the five most difficult; the last is the easiest of all. 'By day a ring, by night a serpent; he who guesses this shall be my bridegroom.'"

"It is a girdle."

"Now they are all guessed," said she, and gave her hand to the young prince.

They knelt before the king and queen to receive their blessing. The three weddings were celebrated that same evening, and a messenger mounted the winged horse to carry the good news to the parents of the young princes and to bring them back as guests. Meanwhile a magnificent feast was prepared, and invitations were sent to all their friends and acquaintances. And from that evening until the next morning they ceased not to feast and drink and dance. I, too, was a guest, and feasted with the rest; but though I ate and drank, the wine only ran down my beard, and my throat remained dry.

THE DWARF WITH THE LONG BEARD

By Alex. Chodsko

IN a far distant land there reigned a king, and he had an only daughter who was so very beautiful that no one in the whole kingdom could be compared to her. She was known as Princess Pietnotka, and the fame of her beauty spread far and wide. There were many princes among her suitors, but her choice fell upon Prince Dobrotek. She obtained her father's consent to their marriage, and then, attended by a numerous suite, set off with her lover for the church, having first, as was the custom, received her royal parent's blessing. Most of the princes who had been unsuccessful in their wooing of Pietnotka returned disappointed to their own kingdoms; but one of them, a dwarf only seven inches high, with an enormous hump on his back and a beard seven feet long, who was a powerful prince and magician, was so enraged that he determined to have his revenge. So he changed himself into a whirlwind and lay in wait to receive the princess. When the wedding procession was about to enter the church, the air was suddenly filled with a blinding cloud of dust, and Pietnotka was borne up high as the highest clouds, and then right down to an underground palace. There the dwarf, for it was he who had

worked this spell, disappeared, leaving her in a lifeless condition.

When she opened her eyes she found herself in such a magnificent apartment that she imagined some king must have run away with her. She got up and began to walk about, when lo! as if by some unseen hand, the table was laden with gold and silver dishes, filled with cakes of every kind. They looked so tempting that in spite of her grief she could not resist tasting, and she continued to eat until she was more than satisfied. She returned to the sofa and lay down to rest, but being unable to sleep, she looked first at the door, and then at the lamp burning on the table, then at the door again, and then back to the lamp. Suddenly the door opened of itself, giving entrance to four negroes fully armed, and bearing a golden throne, upon which was seated the Dwarf with the Long Beard. He came close up to the sofa and attempted to kiss the princess, but she struck him such a blow in the face that a thousand stars swam before his eyes, and a thousand bells rang in his ears; upon which he gave such a shout that the palace walls trembled. Yet his love for her was so great that he did his best not to show his anger, and turned away as if to leave her. But his feet became entangled in his long beard, and he fell down, dropping a cap he was carrying in his hand. Now this cap had the power of making its wearer invisible. The negroes hastened up to their master, and placing him on his throne bore him out.

As soon as the princess found herself alone, she jumped off the sofa, locked the door, and, picking up

the cap, ran to a mirror to try it on and see how it suited her. Imagine her amazement when looking in the glass she saw — nothing at all! She took off the cap, and behold, she was there again as large as life. She soon found out what sort of cap it was, and rejoicing in the possession of such a marvel, put it on her head again and began to walk about the room. Soon the door was burst violently open, and the dwarf entered with his beard tied up. But he found neither the princess nor the cap, and so came to the conclusion that she had taken it. In a great rage he began to search high and low; he looked under all the furniture, behind the curtains, and even beneath the carpets, but it was all in vain. Meanwhile the princess, still invisible, had left the palace and run into the garden, which was very large and beautiful. There she lived at her ease, eating the delicious fruit, drinking water from the fountain, and enjoying the helpless fury of the dwarf, who sought her untiringly. Sometimes she would throw the fruit-stones in his face, or take off the cap and show herself for an instant: then she would put it on again, and laugh merrily at his rage.

One day, while playing this game, the cap caught in the branches of a gooseberry bush. The dwarf, seeing this, at once ran up, seized the princess in one hand and the cap in the other, and was about to carry both off when the sound of a war-trumpet was heard.

The dwarf trembled with rage and muttered a thousand curses. He breathed on the princess to send her to sleep, covered her with the invisible cap, and seizing a double-bladed sword, rose up in the air as high as

the clouds, so that he might fall upon his assailant and kill him at one stroke. We shall now see with whom he had to deal.

After the hurricane had upset the wedding procession and carried off the princess, there arose a great tumult among those at court. The king, the princess's attendants, and Prince Dobrotek sought her in every direction, calling her by name, and making inquiries of every one they met. At last, the king in despair declared that if Prince Dobrotek did not bring back his daughter, he would destroy his kingdom and have him killed. And to the other princes present he promised that whosoever among them should bring Pietnotka back to him should have her for his wife and receive half of the kingdom. Whereupon they all mounted their horses without loss of time and dispersed in every direction.

Prince Dobrotek, overpowered with grief and dismay, traveled three days without eating, drinking, or sleeping. On the evening of the third day he was quite worn out with fatigue, and stopping his horse in a field, got down to rest for a short time. Suddenly he heard cries, as of something in pain, and looking round saw an enormous owl tearing a hare with its claws. The prince laid hold of the first hard thing that came to his hand, — he imagined it to be a stone, but it was really a skull, — and aiming it at the owl, killed the bird with the first blow. The rescued hare ran up to him and gratefully licked his hands, after which it ran away; but the human skull spoke to him and said, "Prince Dobrotek, accept my grateful thanks for the good turn

you have done me. I belonged to an unhappy man who took his own life, and for this crime of suicide I have been condemned to roll in the mud until I was the means of saving the life of one of God's creatures. I have been kicked about for seven hundred and seventy years, crumbling miserably on the earth, and without exciting the compassion of a single individual. You have been the means of setting me free by making use of me to save the life of that poor hare. In return for this kindness I will teach you how to call to your aid a most marvelous horse, who during my life belonged to me. He will be able to help you in a thousand ways, and when in need of him you have only to walk out on the moorland without once looking behind you, and to say: —

'Dappled Horse with Mane of Gold,
Horse of Wonder, come to me!
Walk not the earth, for I am told
You fly like birds o'er land and sea.

Finish your work of mercy by burying me here, so that I may be at rest until the day of judgment. Then depart in peace and be of good cheer."

The prince dug a hole at the foot of a tree, and reverently buried the skull, repeating over it the prayers for the dead. Just as he finished he saw a small blue flame come out of the skull and fly towards heaven: it was the soul of the dead man on its way to the angels.

The prince made the sign of the cross and resumed his journey. When he had gone some way along the moorland he stopped, and without looking back tried the effect of the magic words, saying: —

"Dappled Horse with Mane of Gold,
Horse of Wonder, come to me!
Walk not the earth, for I am told
You fly like birds o'er land and sea."

Then amid flash of lightning and roll of thunder appeared the horse. A horse, do I say? Why, he was a miracle of wonder. He was light as air, with dappled coat and golden mane. Flames came from his nostrils and sparks from his eyes. Volumes of steam rolled from his mouth, and clouds of smoke issued from his ears. He stopped before the prince, and said in a human voice, "What are your orders, Prince Dobrotek?"

"I am in great trouble," answered the prince, "and shall be glad if you can help me." Then he told all that had happened.

And the horse said, "Enter in at my left ear, and come out at my right."

The prince obeyed, and came out at the right ear clad in a suit of splendid armor. His gilded cuirass, his steel helmet inlaid with gold, and his sword and club made of him a complete warrior. Still more, he felt himself endowed with superhuman strength and bravery. When he stamped his foot and shouted, the earth trembled and gave forth a sound like thunder; the very leaves fell from the trees.

"What must we do? Where are we to go?" he asked.

The horse replied, "Your bride, Princess Pietnotka, has been carried off by the Dwarf with the Long Beard, whose hump weighs two hundred and eighty pounds. This powerful magician must be defeated, but he lives a long way from here, and nothing can touch or wound

him except the sharp smiting sword that belongs to his own brother, a monster with the head and eyes of a basilisk. We must first attack the brother."

Prince Dobrotek leaped on to the dappled horse, which was covered with golden trappings, and they set off immediately, clearing mountains, penetrating forests, crossing rivers; and so light was the steed's step that he galloped over the grass without bending a single blade, and along sandy roads without raising a grain of dust. At last they reached a vast plain, strewn with human bones. They stopped in front of a huge moving mountain, and the horse said:—

"Prince, this moving mountain that you see before you is the head of the Monster with Basilisk Eyes, and the bones that whiten the ground are the skeletons of his victims; so beware of the eyes that deal death. The heat of the midday sun has made the giant sleep, and the sword with the never-failing blade lies there before him. Bend down and lie along my neck until we are near enough, then seize the sword and you have nothing more to fear. For, without the sword, not only will the monster be unable to harm you, but he himself will be completely at your mercy."

The horse then noiselessly approached the huge creature, upon which the prince bent down, and quickly picked up the sword. Then, raising himself on his steed's back, he gave a "Hurrah!" loud enough to wake the dead. The giant lifted his head, yawned, and turned his bloodthirsty eyes upon the prince; but seeing the sword in his hand he became quiet, and said, "Knight, is it weariness of life that brings you here?"

"Boast not," replied the prince, "you are in my power. Your glance has already lost its magic charm, and you will soon have to die by this sword. But first tell me who you are."

"It is true, prince, I am in your hands, but be generous; I deserve your pity. I am a knight of the race of giants, and if it were not for the wickedness of my brother I should have lived in peace. He is the horrible dwarf with the great hump and the beard seven feet long. He was jealous of my fine figure, and tried to do me an injury. You must know that all his strength, which is extraordinary, lies in his beard, and it can only be cut off by the sword you hold in your hand. One day he came to me and said, 'Dear brother, I pray you help me to discover the sharp smiting sword that has been hidden in the earth by a magician. He is our enemy, and he alone can destroy us both.' Fool that I was, I believed him, and by means of a large oak-tree, raked up the mountain and found the sword. Then we disputed as to which of us should have it, and at last my brother suggested that we should cease quarreling and decide by lot. 'Let us each put an ear to the ground, and the sword shall belong to him who first hears the bells of yonder church,' said he. I placed my ear to the ground at once, and my brother treacherously cut off my head with the sword. My body, left unburied, became a great mountain, which is now overgrown with forests. As for my head, it is full of a life and strength proof against all dangers, and has remained here ever since to frighten all who attempt to take away the sword. Now, prince, I beg of you,

use the sword to cut off the beard of my wicked brother, kill him, and return here to put an end to me: I shall die happy if I die avenged."

"That you shall be, and very soon, I promise you," replied his listener.

The prince bade the Dappled Horse with Golden Mane carry him to the kingdom of the Dwarf with the Long Beard. They reached the garden gate at the very moment when the dwarf had caught sight of Princess Pietnotka and was running after her. The war-trumpet, challenging him to fight, had obliged him to leave her, which he did, having first put on her head the invisible cap.

While the prince was awaiting the answer to his challenge, he heard a great noise in the clouds, and looking up saw the dwarf preparing to aim at him from a great height. But he missed his aim and fell to the ground so heavily that his body was half buried in the earth. The prince seized him by the beard, which he at once cut off with the sharp smiting sword.

Then he fastened the dwarf to the saddle, put the beard in his helmet, and entered the palace. When the servants saw that he had really got possession of the terrible beard, they opened all the doors to give him entrance. Without losing a moment he began his search for Princess Pietnotka. For a long time he was unsuccessful, and was almost in despair when he came across her accidentally, and, without knowing it, knocked off the invisible cap. He saw his lovely bride sound asleep, and being unable to wake her he put the cap in his pocket, took her in his arms, and, mounting his steed, set off to return to the Monster with the Basilisk Eyes.

The giant swallowed the dwarf at one mouthful, and the prince cut the monster's head up into a thousand pieces, which he scattered all over the plain.

He then resumed his journey, and on coming to the moorland the dappled horse stopped short and said, "Prince, here for the present we must take leave of each other. You are not far from home, — your own horse awaits you; but before leaving, enter in at my right ear and come out at my left."

The prince did so, and came out without his armor, and clad as when Pietnotka left him.

The dappled horse vanished, and Dobrotek whistled to his own horse, who ran up, quite pleased to see him again. They immediately set off for the king's palace.

But night came on before they reached the end of their journey.

The prince laid the sleeping maiden on the grass, and, covering her up carefully to keep her warm, he himself fell fast asleep. By chance, a knight, one of her suitors, passed that way. Seeing Dobrotek asleep, he drew his sword and stabbed him; then he lifted the princess on his horse and soon reached the king's palace, where he addressed Pietnotka's father in these words: "Here is your daughter, whom I now claim as my wife, for it is I who have restored her to you. She was carried off by a terrible sorcerer who fought with me three days and three nights. But I conquered him, and I have brought you the princess safely back."

The king was overjoyed at seeing her again, but finding that his tenderest efforts were powerless to awake her, he wanted to know the reason of it.

"That I cannot tell you," replied the impostor; "you see her as I found her myself."

Meanwhile, poor Prince Dobrotek, seriously wounded, was slowly recovering consciousness, but he felt so weak that he could hardly utter these words:—

"Come, Magic Horse with Mane of Gold,
Come, Dappled Horse, O come to me.
Fly like the birds as you did of old,
As flashes of lightning o'er land and sea."

Instantly a bright cloud appeared, and from the midst thereof stepped the magic horse. As he already knew all that had happened, he dashed off immediately to the Mountain of Eternal Life. Thence he drew the three kinds of water: the Water that gives Life, the Water that Cures, and the Water that Strengthens. Returning to the prince, he sprinkled him first with the Life-giving Water, and instantly the body, which had become cold, was warm again, and the blood began to circulate. The Water that Cures healed the wound, and the Strength-giving Water had such an effect upon him that he opened his eyes and cried out, "Oh, how well I have slept!"

"You were already sleeping the eternal sleep," replied the dappled horse. "One of your rivals stabbed you mortally, and carried off Pietnotka, whom he pretends to have rescued. But do not worry yourself; she still sleeps, and none can arouse her but you, and this you must do by touching her with the dwarf's beard. Go now, and be happy."

The brave steed disappeared in a whirlwind, and Prince Dobrotek proceeded on his way. On drawing

near the capital he saw it surrounded by a large foreign army; part of it was already taken, and the inhabitants seemed to be begging for mercy. The prince put on his invisible cap, and began to strike right and left with the sharp smiting sword. With such fury did he attack the enemy that they fell dead on all sides, like felled trees. When he had thus destroyed the whole army, he went, still invisible, into the palace, where he heard the king express the utmost astonishment that the enemy had retired without fighting.

"Where, then, is the brave warrior who has saved us?" said his majesty aloud.

Every one was silent, when Dobrotek took off his magic cap, and falling on his knees before the monarch, said, "It is I, my king and father, who have routed and destroyed the enemy. It is I who saved the princess, my bride. While on my way back with her I was treacherously killed by my rival, who has represented himself to you as her rescuer, but he has deceived you. Lead me to the princess, that I may awaken her."

On hearing these words the impostor ran away as quickly as possible, and Dobrotek approached the sleeping maiden. He just touched her brow with the dwarf's beard, upon which she opened her eyes, smiled, and seemed to ask where she was.

The king, overcome with joy, kissed her fondly, and the same evening she was married to the devoted Prince Dobrotek. The king himself led her to the altar, and to his son-in-law he gave half his kingdom. So splendid was the wedding banquet that eye has never seen, nor ear ever heard, of its equal.

THE SUN; OR, THE THREE GOLDEN HAIRS OF THE OLD MAN VSÉVÈDE

By Alex. Chodsko

CAN this be a true story? It is said that once there was a king who was exceedingly fond of hunting the wild beasts in his forests. One day he followed a stag so far and so long that he lost his way. Alone and overtaken by night, he was glad to find himself near a small thatched cottage in which lived a charcoal-burner.

"Will you kindly show me the way to the high-road? You shall be handsomely rewarded."

"I would willingly," said the charcoal-burner, "but God is going to send my wife a little child, and I cannot leave her alone. Will you pass the night under our roof? There is a truss of sweet hay in the loft where you may rest, and to-morrow morning I will be your guide."

The king accepted the invitation and went to bed in the loft. Shortly after, a son was born to the charcoal-burner's wife. But the king could not sleep. At midnight he heard noises in the house, and looking through a crack in the flooring he saw the charcoal-burner asleep, his wife almost in a faint, and by the side of the newly born babe three old women dressed in white, each holding a lighted taper in her hand, and all talking together. Now these were the three Soudiché, or Fates, you must know.

The first said, "On this boy I bestow the gift of confronting great dangers."

The second said, "I bestow the power of happily escaping all these dangers, and living to a good old age."

The third said, "I bestow upon him for wife the princess born at the selfsame hour as he, and daughter of the very king sleeping above in the loft."

At these words the lights went out and silence reigned around.

Now the king was greatly troubled, and wondered exceedingly; he felt as if he had received a sword-thrust in the chest. He lay awake all night thinking how to prevent the words of the Fates from coming true.

With the first glimmer of morning light the baby began to cry. The charcoal-burner, on going over to it, found that his wife was dead.

"Poor little orphan," he said sadly, "what will become of thee without a mother's care?"

"Confide this child to me," said the king. "I will look after it. He shall be well provided for. You shall be given a sum of money large enough to keep you without having to burn charcoal."

The poor man gladly agreed, and the king went away promising to send some one for the child. The queen and courtiers thought it would be an agreeable surprise for the king to hear that a charming little princess had been born on the night he was away. But instead of being pleased he frowned, and calling one of his servants, said to him, "Go to the charcoal-burner's cottage in the forest, and give the man this purse in exchange for a new-born infant. On your way back drown the

child. See well that he is drowned, for if he should in any way escape, you yourself shall suffer in his place."

The servant was given the child in a basket, and on reaching the centre of a narrow bridge that stretched across a wide and deep river, he threw both basket and baby into the water.

"A prosperous journey to you, Mr. Son-in-Law," said the king, on hearing the servant's story; for he fully believed the child was drowned. But it was far from being the case; the little one was floating happily along in his basket cradle, and slumbering as sweetly as if his mother had sung him to sleep. Now it happened that a fisherman, who was mending his nets before his cottage door, saw the basket floating down the river. He jumped at once into his boat, picked it up, and ran to tell his wife the good news.

"Look," said he, "you have always longed for a son; here is a beautiful little boy the river has sent us."

The woman was delighted, and took the infant and loved it as her own child. They named him Plavacek (the floater), because he had come to them floating on the water.

The river flowed on. Years passed away. The little baby grew into a handsome youth; in all the villages round there were none to compare with him. Now it happened that one summer day the king was riding unattended. And the heat being very great, he reined in his horse before the fisherman's door to ask for a drink of water. Plavacek brought the water. The king looked at him attentively, then turning to the fisherman, said, "That is a good-looking lad; is he your son?"

"He is and he is n't," replied the fisherman. "I found him, when he was quite a tiny baby, floating down the stream in a basket. So we adopted him and brought him up as our own son."

The king turned as pale as death, for he guessed that he was the same child he had ordered to be drowned. Then recovering himself he got down from his horse and said, "I want a trusty messenger to take a letter to the palace; could you send him with it?"

"With pleasure! Your majesty may be sure of its safe delivery."

Thereupon the king wrote to the queen as follows:

"The man who brings you this letter is the most dangerous of all my enemies. Have his head cut off at once; no delay, no pity, he must be executed before my return. Such is my will and pleasure."

This he carefully folded and sealed with the royal seal.

Plavacek took the letter and set off immediately. But the forest through which he had to pass was so large, and the trees so thick, that he missed the path and was overtaken by the darkness before the journey was nearly over. In the midst of his trouble he met an old woman who said, "Where are you going, Plavacek? Where are you going?"

"I am the bearer of a letter from the king to the queen, but have missed the path to the palace. Could you, good mother, put me on the right road?"

"Impossible to-day, my child; it is getting dark, and you would not have time to get there. Stay with me to-night. You will not be with strangers, for I am your godmother."

Plavacek agreed. Thereupon they entered a pretty little cottage that seemed suddenly to sink into the earth. Now while he slept the old woman changed his letter for another which ran thus: —

"Immediately upon the receipt of this letter introduce the bearer to the princess our daughter. I have chosen this young man for my son-in-law, and it is my wish they should be married before my return to the palace. Such is my pleasure."

The letter was duly delivered, and when the queen had read it, she ordered everything to be prepared for the wedding. Both she and her daughter greatly enjoyed Plavacek's society, and nothing disturbed the happiness of the newly married pair.

Within a few days the king returned, and on hearing what had taken place was very angry with the queen.

"But you expressly bade me have the wedding before your return. Come, read your letter again; here it is," said she.

He closely examined the letter; the paper, handwriting, seal — all were undoubtedly his. He then called his son-in-law, and questioned him about his journey. Plavacek hid nothing, — he told how he had lost his way, and how he had passed the night in a cottage in the forest.

"What was the old woman like?" asked the king.

From Plavacek's description the king knew it was the very same who, twenty years before, had foretold the marriage of the princess with the charcoal-burner's son. After some moments' thought the king said, "What is done is done. But you will not become my son-in-law so

easily. No, i' faith! As a wedding present you must bring me three golden hairs from the head of Dède-Vsévède."

In this way he thought to get rid of his son-in-law, whose very presence was distasteful to him. The young fellow took leave of his wife and set off. "I know not which way to go," said he to himself, "but my god-mother the witch will surely help me."

But he found the way easily enough. He walked on and on and on for a long time over mountain, valley, and river, until he reached the shores of the Black Sea. There he found a boat and boatman.

"May God bless you, old boatman," said he.

"And you, too, my young traveler. Where are you going?"

"To Dède-Vsévède's castle for three of his golden hairs."

"Ah, then you are very welcome. For a long weary while I have been waiting for such a messenger as you. I have been ferrying passengers across for these twenty years, and not one of them has done anything to help me. If you will promise to ask Dède-Vsévède when I shall be released from my toil I will row you across."

Plavacek promised, and was rowed to the opposite bank. He continued his journey on foot until he came in sight of a large town half in ruins, near which was passing a funeral procession. The king of that country was following his father's coffin, and with the tears running down his cheeks.

"May God comfort you in your distress," said Plavacek.

"Thank you, good traveler. Where are you going?"

"To the house of Dède-Vsévède in quest of three of his golden hairs."

"To the house of Dède-Vsévède? Indeed! What a pity you did not come sooner; we have long been expecting such a messenger as you. Come and see me by and by."

When Plavacek presented himself at court the king said to him: —

"We understand you are on your way to the house of Dède-Vsévède? Now we have an apple-tree here that bears the fruit of everlasting youth. One of these apples eaten by a man, even though he be dying, will cure him and make him young again. For the last twenty years neither fruit nor flower has been found on this tree. Will you ask Dède-Vsévède the cause of it?"

"That I will, with pleasure."

Then Plavacek continued his journey, and as he went he came to a large and beautiful city where all was sad and silent. Near the gate was an old man who leant on a stick and walked with difficulty.

"May God bless you, good old man."

"And you, too, my handsome young traveler. Where are you going?"

"To Dède-Vsévède's palace in search of three of his golden hairs."

"Ah, you are the very messenger I have so long waited for. Allow me to take you to my master, the king."

On their arrival at the palace, the king said, "I hear you are an ambassador to Dède-Vsévède. We have

here a well, the water of which renews itself. So wonderful are its effects that invalids are immediately cured on drinking it, while a few drops sprinkled on a corpse will bring it to life again. For the past twenty years this well has remained dry. If you will ask old Dède-Vsévède how the flow of water may be restored, I will reward you royally."

Plavacek promised to do so, and was dismissed with good wishes. He then traveled through deep, dark forests, in the midst of which might be seen a large meadow; out of it grew lovely flowers, and in the centre stood a castle built of gold. It was the home of Dède-Vsévède. So brilliant with light was it that it seemed to be built of fire. When he entered there was no one in sight but an old woman spinning.

"Greeting, Plavacek. I am well pleased to see you."

She was his godmother, who had given him shelter in her cottage when he was the bearer of the king's letter.

"Tell me what brings you here from such a distance," she went on.

"The king would not have me for a son-in-law, unless I first got him three golden hairs from the head of Dède-Vsévède. So he sent me here to fetch them."

The Fate laughed. "Déde-Vsévède indeed! Why, I am his mother; it is the shining sun himself. He is a child at morning time, a grown man at midday, a decrepit old man, looking as if he had lived a hundred years, at eventide. But I will see that you have the three hairs from his head; I am not your godmother for nothing. All the same you must not remain here. My son is a good lad, but when he comes home he

is hungry, and would very probably order you to be roasted for his supper. Now I will turn this empty bucket upside down, and you shall hide underneath it."

Plavacek begged the Fate to obtain from Dède-Vsévède the answers to the three questions he had been asked.

"I will do so certainly, but you must listen to what he says."

Suddenly a blast of wind howled round the palace, and the Sun entered by a western window. He was an old man with golden hair.

"I smell human flesh," cried he. "I am sure of it. Mother, you have some one here."

"Star of day," she replied, "whom could I have here that you would not see sooner than I? The fact is that in your daily journeys the scent of human flesh is always with you, so when you come home at evening it clings to you still."

The old man said nothing, and sat down to supper. When he had finished he laid his golden head on the Fate's lap and went to sleep. Then she pulled out a hair and threw it on the ground. It fell with a metallic sound like the vibration of a guitar string.

"What do you want, mother?" asked he.

"Nothing, my son; I was sleeping, and had a strange dream."

"What was it, mother?"

"I thought I was in a place where there was a well, and the well was fed from a spring, the water of which cured all diseases. Even the dying were restored to health on drinking that water, and the dead who were

sprinkled with it came to life again. For the last twenty years the well has run dry. What must be done to restore the flow of water?"

"That is very simple. A frog has lodged itself in the opening of the spring; this prevents the flow of water. Kill the frog, and the water will return to the well."

He slept again, and the old woman pulled out another golden hair, and threw it on the ground.

"Mother, what do you want?"

"Nothing, my son, nothing; I was dreaming. In my dream I saw a large town, the name of which I have forgotten. And there grew an apple-tree the fruit of which had the power to make the old young again. A single apple eaten by an old man would restore to him the vigor and freshness of youth. For twenty years this tree has not borne fruit. What can be done to make it fruitful?"

"The means are not difficult. A snake hidden among the roots destroys the sap. Kill the snake, transplant the tree, and the fruit will grow as before."

He again fell asleep, and the old woman pulled out another golden hair.

"Now look here, mother, why will you not let me sleep?"

"Lie down, my darling son; do not disturb yourself. I am sorry I awoke you, but I have had a very strange dream. It seemed that I saw a boatman on the shores of the Black Sea, and he complained that he had been toiling at the ferry for twenty years without any one having come to take his place. For how much longer must this poor old man continue to row?"

"He is a silly fellow. He has but to place his oars in the hands of the first comer and jump ashore. Whoever receives the oars will replace him as ferryman. But leave me in peace now, mother, and do not wake me again. I have to rise very early, and must first dry the eyes of a princess. The poor thing spends all night weeping for her husband, who has been sent by the king to get three of my golden hairs."

Next morning the wind whistled round Dède-Vsévède's palace, and instead of an old man, a beautiful child with golden hair awoke on the old woman's lap. It was the glorious sun. He bade her good-by, and flew out of the eastern window. The old woman turned up the bucket and said to Plavacek, "Look, here are the three golden hairs. You now know the answers to your questions. May God direct you and send you a prosperous journey. You will not see me again, for you will have no further need of me."

He thanked her gratefully and left her. On arriving at the town with the dried-up well, he was questioned by the king as to what news he had brought.

"Have the well carefully cleaned out," said he, "kill the frog that obstructs the spring, and the wonderful water will flow again."

The king did as he was advised, and rejoiced to see the water return. He gave Plavacek twelve swan-white horses, and as much gold and silver as they could carry.

On reaching the second town and being asked by the king what news he had brought, he replied, "Excellent, — one could not wish for better. Dig up your

apple-tree, kill the snake that lies among the roots, transplant the tree, and it will produce apples like those of former times."

And all turned out as he had said, for no sooner was the tree replanted than it was covered with blossoms that gave it the appearance of a sea of roses. The delighted king gave him twelve raven-black horses, laden with as much wealth as they could carry. He then journeyed to the shores of the Black Sea. There the boatman questioned him as to what news he had brought respecting his release. Plavacek first crossed with his twenty-four horses to the opposite bank, and then replied that the boatman might gain his freedom by placing the oars in the hands of the first traveler who wished to be ferried over.

Plavacek's royal father-in-law could not believe his eyes when he saw Dède-Vsévède's three golden hairs. As for the princess, his young wife, she wept tears, but of joy, not sadness, to see her dear one again, and she said to him, "How did you get such splendid horses and so much wealth, dear husband?"

And he answered her, "All this represents the price paid for the weariness of spirit I have felt; it is the ready money for hardships endured and services given. Thus, I showed one king how to regain possession of the Apples of Youth; to another I told the secret of reopening the spring of water that gives health and life."

"Apples of Youth! Water of Life!" interrupted the king. "I will certainly go and find these treasures for myself. Ah, what joy! having eaten of these apples

I shall become young again; having drunk of the Water of Immortality, I shall live forever."

And he started off in search of these treasures. But he has not yet returned from his search.

MYTHS OF INDIA

MUCHIE LAL

By M. Frere

ONCE upon a time there were a Rajah and Ranee who had no children. Long had they wished and prayed that the gods would send them a son, but it was all in vain — their prayers were not granted. One day a number of fish were brought into the royal kitchen to be cooked for the Rajah's dinner, and amongst them was one little fish that was not dead, but all the rest were dead. One of the palace maid-servants, seeing this, took the little fish and put him in a basin of water. Shortly afterward the Ranee saw him, and thinking him very pretty, kept him as a pet; and because she had no children she lavished all her affection on the fish and loved him as a son; and the people called him Muchie Rajah (the Fish Prince).

In a little while Muchie Rajah had grown too long to live in the small basin, so they put him into a larger one, and then (when he grew too long for that) into a big tub. In time, however, Muchie Rajah became too large for even the big tub to hold him; so the Ranee had a tank made for him, in which he lived very happily, and twice a day she fed him with boiled rice. Now, though the people fancied Muchie Rajah was only a fish, this was not the case. He was, in truth, a young Rajah who had angered the gods, and been

by them turned into a fish and thrown into the river as a punishment.

One morning, when the Ranee brought him his daily meal of boiled rice, Muchie Rajah called out to her and said, "Queen Mother, Queen Mother, I am so lonely here all by myself! Cannot you get me a wife?" The Ranee promised to try, and sent messengers to all the people she knew, to ask if they would allow one of their children to marry her son, the Fish Prince. But they all answered, "We cannot give one of our dear little daughters to be devoured by a great fish, even though he is the Muchie Rajah and so high in your Majesty's favor."

At news of this the Ranee did not know what to do. She was so foolishly fond of Muchie Rajah, however, that she resolved to get him a wife at any cost. Again she sent out messengers, but this time she gave them a great bag containing a lac of gold mohurs, and said to them, "Go into every land until you find a wife for my Muchie Rajah, and to whoever will give you a child to be the Muchie Ranee you shall give this bag of gold mohurs." The messengers started on their search, but for some time they were unsuccessful; not even the beggars were to be tempted to sell their children, fearing the great fish would devour them. At last one day the messengers came to a village where there lived a Fakeer, who had lost his first wife and married again. His first wife had had one little daughter, and his second wife also had a daughter. As it happened, the Fakeer's second wife hated her little stepdaughter, always gave her the hardest work to do and the least food to eat, and tried by every means in her power to get her out of the way, in

order that the child might not rival her own daughter. When she heard of the errand on which the messengers had come, she sent for them when the Fakeer was out, and said to them, "Give me the bag of gold mohurs, and you shall take my little daughter to marry the Muchie Rajah." ("For," she thought to herself, "the great fish will certainly eat the girl, and she will thus trouble us no more.") Then, turning to her stepdaughter, she said, "Go down to the river and wash your saree, that you may be fit to go with these people, who will take you to the Ranee's court." At these words the poor girl went down to the river very sorrowful, for she saw no hope of escape, as her father was from home. As she knelt by the river-side, washing her saree and crying bitterly, some of her tears fell into the hole of an old Seven-headed Cobra, who lived on the river-bank. This Cobra was a very wise animal, and seeing the maiden, he put his head out of his hole, and said to her, "Little girl, why do you cry?" "Oh, sir," she answered, "I am very unhappy; for my father is from home, and my step-mother has sold me to the Ranee's people to be the wife of the Muchie Rajah, that great fish, and I know he will eat me up." "Do not be afraid, my daughter," said the Cobra; "but take with you these three stones and tie them up in the corner of your saree;" and so saying, he gave her three little round pebbles. "The Muchie Rajah, whose wife you are to be, is not really a fish, but a Rajah who has been enchanted. Your home will be a little room which the Ranee has had built in the tank wall. When you are taken there, wait and be sure you don't go to sleep, or the Muchie Rajah will certainly

come and eat you up. But as you hear him coming rushing through the water, be prepared, and as soon as you see him, throw this first stone at him; he will then sink to the bottom of the tank. The second time he comes, throw the second stone, when the same thing will happen. The third time he comes, throw this third stone, and he will immediately resume his human shape." So saying, the old Cobra dived down again into his hole. The Fakeer's daughter took the stones and determined to do as the Cobra had told her, though she hardly believed it would have the desired effect.

When she reached the palace the Ranee spoke kindly to her, and said to the messengers, "You have done your errand well; this is a dear little girl." Then she ordered that she should be let down the side of the tank in a basket to a little room which had been prepared for her. When the Fakeer's daughter got there, she thought she had never seen such a pretty place in her life (for the Ranee had caused the little room to be very nicely decorated for the wife of her favorite); and she would have felt very happy away from her cruel stepmother and all the hard work she had been made to do, had it not been for the dark water that lay black and unfathomable below the door, and the fear of the terrible Muchie Rajah.

After waiting some time she heard a rushing sound, and little waves came dashing against the threshold; faster they came and faster, and the noise got louder and louder, until she saw a great fish's head above the water — Muchie Rajah was coming toward her open-mouthed. The Fakeer's daughter seized one of the stones that the

Cobra had given her and threw it at him, and down he sank to the bottom of the tank; a second time he rose and came toward her, and she threw the second stone at him, and he again sank down; a third time he came more fiercely than before, when, seizing a third stone, she threw it with all her force. No sooner did it touch him than the spell was broken, and there, instead of a fish, stood a handsome young prince. The poor little Fakeer's daughter was so startled that she began to cry. But the prince said to her, "Pretty maiden, do not be frightened. You have rescued me from a horrible thraldom, and I can never thank you enough; but if you will be the Muchie Ranee, we will be married to-morrow." Then he sat down on the doorstep, thinking over his strange fate and watching for the dawn.

Next morning early several inquisitive people came to see if the Muchie Rajah had eaten up his poor little wife, as they feared he would; what was their astonishment, on looking over the tank wall, to see, not the Muchie Rajah, but a magnificent prince! The news soon spread to the palace. Down came the Rajah, down came the Ranee, down came all their attendants, and dragged Muchie Rajah and the Fakeer's daughter up the side of the tank in a basket; and when they heard their story there were great and unparalleled rejoicings. The Ranee said, "So I have indeed found a son at last!" And the people were so delighted, so happy and so proud of the new prince and princess, that they covered all their path with damask from the tank to the palace, and cried to their fellows, "Come and see our new prince and princess! Were ever any so divinely beautiful? Come

see a right royal couple, — a pair of mortals like the gods!" And when they reached the palace the prince was married to the Fakeer's daughter.

There they lived very happily for some time. The Muchie Ranee's stepmother, hearing what had happened, came often to see her stepdaughter, and pretended to be delighted at her good fortune; and the Ranee was so good that she quite forgave all her stepmother's former cruelty, and always received her very kindly. At last, one day, the Muchie Ranee said to her husband, "It is a weary while since I saw my father. If you will give me leave, I should much like to visit my native village and see him again." "Very well," he replied, "you may go. But do not stay away long; for there can be no happiness for me till you return." So she went, and her father was delighted to see her; but her stepmother, though she pretended to be very kind, was in reality only glad to think she had got the Ranee into her power, and determined, if possible, never to allow her to return to the palace again. One day, therefore, she said to her own daughter, "It is hard that your stepsister should have become Ranee of all the land instead of being eaten up by the great fish, while we gained no more than a lac of gold mohurs. Do now as I bid you, that you may become Ranee in her stead." She then went on to instruct her that she must invite the Ranee down to the river-bank, and there beg her to let her try on her jewels, and whilst putting them on give her a push and drown her in the river.

The girl consented, and standing by the river-bank, said to her stepsister, "Sister, may I try on your jewels?

— how pretty they are!" "Yes," said the Ranee, "and we shall be able to see in the river how they look." So, undoing her necklaces, she clasped them round the other's neck. But whilst she was doing so her step-sister gave her a push, and she fell backward into the water. The girl watched to see that the body did not rise, and then, running back, said to her mother, "Mother, here are all the jewels, and she will trouble us no more." But it happened that just when her step-sister pushed the Ranee into the river her old friend the Seven-headed Cobra chanced to be swimming across it, and seeing the little Ranee like to be drowned, he carcried her on his back until he reached his hole, into which he took her safely. Now this hole, in which the Cobra and his wife and all his little ones lived, had two entrances, — the one under the water and leading to the river, and the other above water, leading out into the open fields. To this upper end of his hole the Cobra took the Muchie Ranee, where he and his wife took care of her; and there she lived with them for some time. Meanwhile, the wicked Fakeer's wife, having dressed up her own daughter in all the Ranee's jewels, took her to the palace, and said to the Muchie Rajah, "See, I have brought your wife, my dear daughter, back safe and well." The Rajah looked at her, and thought, "This does not look like my wife." However, the room was dark and the girl was cleverly disguised, and he thought he might be mistaken. Next day he said again, "My wife must be sadly changed or this cannot be she, for she was always bright and cheerful. She had pretty loving ways and merry words, while this woman never opens

her lips." Still, he did not like to seem to mistrust his wife, and comforted himself by saying, "Perhaps she is tired with the long journey." On the third day, however, he could bear the uncertainty no longer, and tearing off her jewels, saw, not the face of his own little wife, but another woman. Then he was very angry and turned her out of doors, saying, "Begone; since you are but the wretched tool of others, I spare your life." But of the Fakeer's wife he said to his guards, "Fetch that woman here instantly; for unless she can tell me where my wife is, I will have her hanged." It chanced, however, that the Fakeer's wife had heard of the Muchie Rajah having turned her daughter out of doors; so, fearing his anger, she hid herself, and was not to be found.

Meantime, the Muchie Ranee, not knowing how to get home, continued to live in the great Seven-headed Cobra's hole, and he and his wife and all his family were very kind to her, and loved her as if she had been one of them; and there her little son was born, and she called him Muchie Lal, after the Muchie Rajah, his father. Muchie Lal was a lovely child, merry and brave, and his playmates all day long were the young Cobras. When he was about three years old a bangle-seller came by that way, and the Muchie Ranee bought some bangles from him and put them on her boy's wrists and ankles; but by next day, in playing, he had broken them all. Then, seeing the bangle-seller, the Ranee called him again and bought some more, and so on every day until the bangle-seller got quite rich from selling so many bangles for the Muchie Lal; for the Cobra's hole was full of treasure,

and he gave the Muchie Ranee as much money to spend every day as she liked. There was nothing she wished for he did not give her, only he would not let her try to get home to her husband, which she wished more than all. When she asked him he would say, "No, I will not let you go. If your husband comes here and fetches you, it is well; but I will not allow you to wander in search of him through the land alone."

And so she was obliged to stay where she was.

All this time the poor Muchie Rajah was hunting in every part of the country for his wife, but he could learn no tidings of her. For grief and sorrow at losing her he had gone well-nigh distracted, and did nothing but wander from place to place, crying, "She is gone! she is gone!" Then, when he had long inquired without avail of all the people in her native village about her, he one day met a bangle-seller and said to him, "Whence do you come?" The bangle-seller answered, "I have just been selling bangles to some people who live in a Cobra's hole in the river-bank." "People! What people?" asked the Rajah. "Why," answered the bangle-seller, "a woman and a child; the child is the most beautiful I ever saw. He is about three years old, and of course, running about, is always breaking his bangles, and his mother buys him new ones every day." "Do you know what the child's name is?" said the Rajah. "Yes," answered the bangle-seller carelessly, "for the lady always calls him her Muchie Lal." "Ah," thought the Muchie Rajah, "this must be my wife." Then he said to him again, "Good bangle-seller, I would see these strange people of whom you speak; cannot you take

me there?" "Not to-night," replied the bangle-seller; "daylight has gone, and we should only frighten them; but I shall be going there again to-morrow, and then you may come too. Meanwhile, come and rest at my house for the night, for you look faint and weary." The Rajah consented. Next morning, however, very early, he woke the bangle-seller, saying, "Pray let us go now and see the people you spoke about yesterday." "Stay," said the bangle-seller; "it is much too early. I never go till after breakfast." So the Rajah had to wait till the bangle-seller was ready to go. At last they started off, and when they reached the Cobra's hole the first thing the Rajah saw was a fine little boy playing with the young Cobras.

As the bangle-seller came along, jingling his bangles, a gentle voice from inside the hole called out, "Come here, my Muchie Lal, and try on your bangles." Then the Muchie Rajah, kneeling down at the mouth of the hole, said, "Oh, lady, show your beautiful face to me." At the sound of his voice the Ranee ran out, crying, "Husband, husband! have you found me again?" And she told him how her sister had tried to drown her, and how the good Cobra had saved her life and taken care of her and her child. Then he said, "And will you now come home with me?" And she told him how the Cobra would never let her go, and said, "I will first tell him of your coming; for he has been as a father to me." So she called out, "Father Cobra, father Cobra, my husband has come to fetch me; will you let me go?" "Yes," he said, "if your husband has come to fetch you, you may go." And his wife said, "Farewell, dear lady, we are

loath to lose you, for we have loved you as a daughter." And all the little Cobras were very sorrowful to think that they must lose their playfellow, the young Prince. Then the Cobra gave the Muchie Rajah and the Muchie Ranee and Muchie Lal all the most costly gifts he could find in his treasure-house; and so they went home, where they lived very happy ever after.

PANCH-PHUL RANEE

By M. Frere

A CERTAIN Rajah had two wives, of whom he preferred the second to the first; the first Ranee had a son, but, because he was not the child of the second Ranee, his father took a great dislike to him, and treated him so harshly that the poor boy was very unhappy.

One day, therefore, he said to his mother: "Mother, my father does not care for me, and my presence is only a vexation to him. I should be happier anywhere than here; let me therefore go and seek my fortune in other lands."

So the Ranee asked her husband if he would allow their son to travel. He said, "The boy is free to go, but I don't see how he is to live in any other part of the world, for he is too stupid to earn his living, and I will give him no money to squander on senseless pleasures." Then the Ranee told her son that he had his father's permission to travel, and said to him, "You are going out into the world now to try your luck; take with you the food and clothes I have provided for your journey." And she gave him a bundle of clothes and several small loaves, and in each loaf she placed a gold mohur, that on opening it he might find money as well as food inside; and he started on his journey.

When the young Rajah had traveled a long way, and left his father's kingdom far behind, he one day came upon the outskirts of a great city, where (instead of taking the position due to his rank, and sending to inform the Rajah of his arrival) he went to a poor carpenter's house, and begged of him a lodging for the night. The carpenter was busy making wooden clogs in the porch of his house, but he looked up, and nodded, saying, "Young man, you are welcome to any assistance a stranger may need and we can give you. If you are in want of food, you will find my wife and daughter in the house; they will be happy to cook for you." The Rajah went inside and said to the carpenter's daughter, "I am a stranger, and have traveled a long way; I am both tired and hungry; cook me some dinner as fast as you can, and I will pay you for your trouble." She answered, "I would willingly cook you some dinner at once, but I have no wood to light the fire, and the jungle is some way off." "It matters not," said the Rajah; "this will do to light the fire, and I'll make the loss good to your father;" and taking a pair of new clogs which the carpenter had just finished making, he broke them up and lighted the fire with them.

Next morning he went into the jungle, cut wood, and, having made a pair of new clogs — better than those with which he had lighted the fire the evening before — placed them with the rest of the goods for sale in the carpenter's shop. Shortly afterward, one of the servants of the Rajah of that country came to buy a pair of clogs for his master, and seeing these

new ones, said to the carpenter, "Why, man, these clogs are better than all the rest put together. I will take none other to the Rajah. I wish you would always make such clogs as these." And throwing down ten gold mohurs on the floor of the hut, he took up the clogs and went away.

The carpenter was much surprised at the whole business. In the first place, he usually received only two or three rupees for each pair of clogs; and in the second, he knew that these which the Rajah's servant had judged worth ten gold mohurs had not been made by him; and how they had come there he could not think, for he felt certain they were not with the rest of the clogs the night before. He thought and thought, but the more he thought about the matter the more puzzled he got, and he went to talk about it to his wife and daughter. Then his daughter said, "Oh, those must have been the clogs the stranger made!" And she told her father how he had lighted the fire the night before with two of the clogs which were for sale, and had afterward fetched wood from the jungle and made another pair to replace them.

The carpenter at this news was more astonished than ever, and he thought to himself, "Since this stranger seems a quiet, peaceable sort of man, and can make clogs so well, it is a great pity he should leave this place; he would make a good husband for my daughter;" and, catching hold of the young Rajah, he propounded his scheme to him. (But all this time he had no idea that his guest was a Rajah.)

Now the carpenter's daughter was a very pretty

girl — as pretty as any Ranee you ever saw; she was also good-tempered, clever, and could cook extremely well. So when the carpenter asked the Rajah to be his son-in-law, he looked at the father, the mother, and the girl, and thinking to himself that many a better man had a worse fate, he said, "Yes, I will marry your daughter, and stay here and make clogs." So the Rajah married the carpenter's daughter.

This Rajah was very clever at making all sorts of things in wood. When he had made all the clogs he wished to sell next day, he would amuse himself in making toys; and in this way he made a thousand wooden parrots. They were as like real parrots as possible. They had each two wings, two legs, two eyes, and a sharp beak. And when the Rajah had finished them all, he painted and varnished them and put them one afternoon outside the house to dry.

Night came on, and with it came Parbuttee and Mahdeo, flying round the world to see the different races of men. Amongst the many places they visited was the city where the carpenter lived; and in the garden in front of the house they saw the thousand wooden parrots which the Rajah had made and painted and varnished, all placed out to dry. Then Parbuttee turned to Mahdeo, and said, "These parrots are very well made — they need nothing but life. Why should not we give them life?" Mahdeo answered, "What would be the use of that? It would be a strange freak, indeed!" "Oh," said Parbuttee, "I only meant you to do it as an amusement. It would be so funny to see the wooden parrots flying about! But do not do it if

you don't like." "You would like it, then?" answered Mahdeo. "Very well, I will do it." And he endowed the thousand parrots with life.

Parbuttee and Mahdeo then flew away.

Next morning the Rajah got up early to see if the varnish he had put on the wooden parrots was dry; but no sooner did he open the door than — marvel of marvels! — the thousand wooden parrots all came walking into the house, flapping their wings and chattering to each other.

Hearing the noise, the carpenter and the carpenter's wife and daughter came running out to see what was the matter, and were not less astonished than the Rajah himself at the miracle which had taken place. Then the carpenter's wife turned to her son-in-law, and said, "It is all very well that you should have made these wooden parrots; but I don't know where we are to find food for them! Great, strong parrots like these will eat not less than a pound of rice apiece every day. Your father-in-law and I cannot afford to procure as much as that for them in this poor house. If you wish to keep them, you must live elsewhere, for we cannot provide for you all."

"Very well," said the Rajah; "you shall not have cause to accuse me of ruining you, for from henceforth I will have a house of my own." So he and his wife went to live in a house of their own, and he took the thousand parrots with him, and his mother-in-law gave her daughter some corn and rice and money to begin housekeeping with. Moreover, he found that the parrots, instead of being an expense, were the means

of increasing his fortune; for they flew away every morning early to get food, and spent the whole day out in the fields; and every evening, when they returned home, each parrot brought in his beak a stalk of corn or rice, or whatever it had found good to eat. So that their master was regularly supplied with more food than enough; and what with selling what he did not require, and working at his trade, he soon became quite a rich carpenter.

After he had been living in this way very happily for some time, one night, when he fell asleep, the Rajah dreamed a wonderful dream, and this was the dream: —

He thought that very, very far away beyond the Red Sea was a beautiful kingdom surrounded by seven other seas; and that it belonged to a Rajah and Ranee who had one lovely daughter, named Panch-Phul Ranee (the Five-Flower Queen), after whom the whole kingdom was called Panch-Phul Ranee's country; and that this princess lived in the centre of her father's kingdom, in a little house round which were seven wide ditches, and seven great hedges made of spears; and that she was called Panch-Phul Ranee because she was so light and delicate that she weighed no more than five white lotus flowers! Moreover, he dreamed that this princess had vowed to marry no one who could not cross the seven seas, and jump the seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears.

After dreaming this the young Rajah awoke, and feeling much puzzled, got up, and sitting with his head in his hands, tried to think the matter over and

discover if he had ever heard anything like his dream before; but he could make nothing of it.

Whilst he was thus thinking, his wife awoke and asked him what was the matter. He told her, and she said, "That is a strange dream. If I were you, I'd ask the old parrot about it; he is a wise bird, and perhaps he knows." This parrot of which she spoke was the most wise of all the thousand wooden parrots. The Rajah took his wife's advice, and when all the birds came home that evening, he called the old parrot and told him his dream, saying, "Can this be true?" To which the parrot replied, "It is all true. The Panch-Phul Ranee's country lies beyond the Red Sea, and is surrounded by seven seas, and she dwells in a house built in the centre of her father's kingdom. Round her house are seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears, and she has vowed not to marry any man who cannot jump these seven ditches and seven hedges; and because she is very beautiful many great and noble men have tried to do this, but in vain.

"The Rajah and Ranee, her father and mother, are very fond of her and proud of her. Every day she goes to the palace to see them, and they weigh her in a pair of scales. They put her in one scale and five lotus flowers in the other, and she's so delicate and fragile she weighs no heavier than the five little flowers, so they call her the Panch-Phul Ranee. Her father and mother are very proud of this."

"I should like to go to that country and see the Panch-Phul Ranee," said the Rajah; "but I don't know how I could cross the seven seas." "I will show

you how to manage that," replied the old parrot. "I and another parrot will fly close together, I crossing my left over his right wing; so that we will move along as if we were one bird (using only our outside wings to fly with), and on the chair made of our interlaced wings you shall sit, and we will carry you safely across the seven seas. On the way we will every evening alight in some high tree and rest, and every morning we can go on again." "That sounds a good plan; I have a great desire to try it," said the Rajah. "Wife, what should you think of my going to the Panch-Phul Ranee's country, and seeing if I can jump the seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears. Will you let me try?"

"Yes," she answered. "If you like to go and marry her, go; only take care that you do not kill yourself; and mind you come back some day." And she prepared food for him to take with him, and took off her gold and silver bangles, which she placed in a bundle of warm things, that he might be in need of neither money nor clothes on the journey. He then charged the nine hundred and ninety-eight parrots he left behind him to bring her plenty of corn and rice daily, that she might never need food while he was away, and took her to the house of her father, in whose care she was to remain during his absence; and he wished her good-by, saying, "Do not fear but that I will come back to you, even if I do win the Panch-Phul Ranee, for you will always be my first wife, though you are the carpenter's daughter."

The old parrot and another parrot then spread their wings, on which the Rajah seated himself as on a chair,

and rising up in the air, they flew away with him out of sight.

Far, far, far they flew, as fast as parrots can fly, over hills, over forests, over rivers, over valleys, on, on, on, hour after hour, day after day, week after week, only staying to rest every night when it got too dark to see where they were going. At last they reached the seven seas which surrounded the Panch-Phul Ranee's country. When once they began crossing the seas they could not rest (for there was neither rock nor island on which to alight), so they were obliged to fly straight across them, night and day, until they gained the shore.

By reason of this the parrots were too exhausted on their arrival to go as far as the city where the Rajah, Panch-Phul Ranee's father, lived, but they flew down to rest on a beautiful banyan tree, which grew not far from the sea, close to a small village. The Rajah determined to go into the village and get food and shelter there. He told the parrots to stay in the banyan-tree till his return; then, leaving his bundle of clothes and most of his money in their charge, he set off on foot toward the nearest house.

After a little while he reached a Malee's cottage, and giving a gold mohur to the Malee's wife, got her to provide him with food and shelter for the night.

Next morning he rose early, and said to his hostess, "I am a stranger here, and know nothing of the place. What is the name of your country?" "This," she said, "is Panch-Phul Ranee's country."

"And what is the last news in your town?" he asked. "Very bad news indeed," she replied. "You must know

our Rajah has one only daughter — a most beautiful Princess — and her name is Panch-Phul Ranee, for she is so light and delicate that she weighs no heavier than five lotus flowers. After her this whole country is called Panch-Phul Ranee's country. She lives in a small bungalow in the centre of the city you see yonder; but, unluckily for us, she has vowed to marry no man who cannot jump on foot over the seven hedges made of spears, and across the seven great ditches that surround her house. This cannot be done, Babamah! I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of rajahs have tried to do it and died in the attempt! Yet the princess will not break her vow. Daily, worse and worse tidings come from the city of fresh people having been killed in trying to jump the seven hedges and seven ditches, and I see no end to the misfortunes that will arise from it. Not only are so many brave men lost to the world, but, since the Princess will marry no one who does not succeed in this, she stands a chance of not marrying at all; and if that be so, when the Rajah dies there will be no one to protect her and claim the right to succeed to the throne. All the nobles will probably fight for the Raj, and the whole kingdom be turned topsy-turvy."

"Mahi," said the Rajah, "if that is all there is to do, I will try and win your princess, for I can jump right well."

"Baba," answered the Malee's wife, "do not think of such a thing; are you mad? I tell you, hundreds of thousands of men have said these words before, and been killed for their rashness. What power do you

think you possess to succeed where all before you have failed? Give up all thought of this, for it is utter folly."

"I will not do it," answered the Rajah, "before going to consult some of my friends."

So he left the Malee's cottage, and returned to the banyan-tree to talk over the matter with the parrots; for he thought they would be able to carry him on their wings across the seven ditches and seven hedges made of spears. When he reached the tree the old parrot said to him, "It is two days since you left us; what news have you brought from the village?" The Rajah answered, "The Panch-Phul Ranee still lives in the house surrounded by the seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears, and has vowed to marry no man who cannot jump over them; but cannot you parrots, who brought me all the way over the seven seas, carry me on your wings across these great barriers?"

"You stupid man!" answered the old parrot; "of course we could, but what would be the good of doing so? If we carried you across, it would not be at all the same thing as your jumping across, and the Princess would no more consent to marry you than she would now; for she has vowed to marry no one who has not jumped across *on foot*. If you want to do the thing, why not do it yourself, instead of talking nonsense? Have you forgotten how, when you were a little boy, you were taught to jump by conjurers and tumblers (for the parrot knew all the Rajah's history)? Now is the time to put their lessons into practice. If you can jump the seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears, you will have done a good work, and be able

to marry the Panch-Phul Ranee; but if not, this is a thing in which we cannot help you."

"You reason justly," replied the Rajah. "I will try to put in practice the lessons I learnt when a boy; meantime, do you stay here till my return."

So saying, he went away to the city, which he reached by nightfall. Next morning early he went to where the Princess's bungalow stood, to try and jump the fourteen great barriers. He was strong and agile, and he jumped the seven great ditches, and six of the seven hedges made of spears; but in running to jump the seventh hedge he hurt his foot, and, stumbling, fell upon the spears and died — run through and through with the cruel iron spikes.

When Panch-Phul Ranee's father and mother got up that morning and looked out, as their custom was, toward their daughter's bungalow, they saw something transfixed upon the seventh hedge of spears, but what it was they could not make out, for it dazzled their eyes. So the Rajah called his Wuzeer and said to him, "For some days I have seen no one attempt to jump the seven hedges and seven ditches round Panch-Phul Ranee's bungalow; but what is that which I now see upon the seventh hedge of spears?"

The Wuzeer answered, "That is a rajah's son, who has failed like all who have gone before him."

"But how is it," answered the Rajah, "that he thus dazzles our eyes?"

"It is," replied the Wuzeer, "because he is so beautiful. Of all that have died for the sake of Panch-Phul Ranee, this youth is, beyond doubt, the handsomest."

"Alas!" cried the Rajah, "how many and how many brave men has my daughter killed? I will have no more die for her. Let us send her and the dead man together away into the jungle."

Then he ordered the servants to fetch the young Rajah's body. There he lay, still and beautiful, with a glory shining round him as the moonlight shines round the clear bright moon, but without a spark of life.

When the Rajah saw him, he said, "Oh, pity, pity, that so brave and handsome a boy should have come dying after this girl. Yet he is but one of the thousands of thousands who have died thus to no purpose. Pull up the spears and cast them into the seven ditches, for they shall remain no longer."

Then he commanded two palanquins to be prepared and men in readiness to carry them, and said, "Let the girl be married to the young Rajah, and let both be taken far away into the jungle, that we may never see them more. Then there will be quiet in the land again."

The Ranee, Panch-Phul Ranee's mother, cried bitterly at this, for she was very fond of her daughter, and she begged her husband not to send her away so cruelly — the living with the dead; but the Rajah was inexorable. "That poor boy died," he said; "let my daughter die too. I'll have no more men killed here."

So the two palanquins were prepared. Then he placed his daughter in the one, and her dead husband in the other, and said to the palkee-bearers, "Take these palkees and go out into the jungle until you have

reached a place so desolate that not so much as a sparrow is to be seen, and there leave them both."

And so they did. Deep down in the jungle, where no bright sun could pierce the darkness, nor human voice be heard, far from any habitation of man or means of supporting life, on the edge of a dank, stagnant morass that was shunned by all but noisome reptiles and wandering beasts of prey, they set them down and left them, the dead husband and the living wife, alone to meet the horrors of the coming night, — alone, without a chance of rescue.

Panch-Phul Ranee heard the bearers' retreating footsteps, and their voices getting fainter and fainter in the distance, and felt that she had nothing to hope for but death.

Night seemed coming on apace, for though the sun had not set, the jungle was so dark that but little light pierced the gloom; and she thought she would take a last look at the husband her vow had killed, and sitting beside him wait till starvation should make her as he was, or some wild animal put a more speedy end to her sufferings.

She left her palkee and went toward his. There he lay with closed eyes and close-shut lips; black curling hair, which escaped from under his turban, concealed a ghastly wound on his temple. There was no look of pain on the face, and the long, sweeping eyelashes gave it such a tender, softened expression she could hardly believe that he was dead. He was, in truth, very beautiful; and watching him she said to herself, "Alas, what a noble being is here lost to the world!

what an earth's joy is extinguished! Was it for this that I was cold, and proud, and stern, — to break the cup of my own happiness and to be the death of such as you? Must you now never know that you won your wife? Must you never hear her ask your pardon for the past, nor know her cruel punishment? Ah, if you had but lived, how dearly I would have loved you! Oh, my husband! my husband!" And sinking down on the ground, she buried her face in her hands and cried bitterly.

While she was sitting thus, night closed over the jungle, and brought with it wild beasts that had left their dens and lairs in search of prey — to roam about, as the heat of the day was over. Tigers, lions, elephants, and buffaloes all came by turns crushing through the underwood which surrounded the place where the palkees were, but they did no harm to Panch-Phul Ranee, for she was so fair that not even the cruel beasts of the forest would injure her. At last, about four o'clock in the morning, all the wild animals had gone, except two little jackals, who had been very busy watching the rest and picking the bones left by the tigers. Tired with running about, they lay down to rest close to the palkees. Then one little jackal said to the other, who was her husband, "Do tell me a little story." "Dear me!" he exclaimed, "what people you women are for stories! Well, look just in front of you; do you see those two?" "Yes," she answered; "what of them?" "That woman you see sitting on the ground," he said, "is the Panch-Phul Ranee." "And what son of a Rajah is the man in the palkee?" asked she.

THE WILD ANIMALS HAD GONE EXCEPT TWO LITTLE JACKALS.

"That," he replied, "is a very sorrowful son. His father was so unkind to him that he left his own home, and went to live in another country very far from this; and there he dreamed about the Panch-Phul Ranee, and came to our land in order to marry her, but he was killed in jumping the seventh hedge of spears, and all he gained was to die for her sake."

"That is very sad," said the first little jackal; "but could he never by any chance come to life again?" "Yes," answered the other; "maybe he could, if only some one knew how to apply the proper remedies." "What are the proper remedies, and how could he be cured?" asked the lady jackal. (Now all this conversation had been heard by Panch-Phul Ranee, and when this question was asked she listened very eagerly and attentively for the answer.)

"Do you see this tree?" replied her husband. "Well, if some of its leaves were crushed, and a little of the juice put into the Rajah's two ears and upon his upper lip, and some upon his temples also, and some upon the spear-wounds in his side, he would come to life again and be as well as ever."

At this moment day dawned, and the two little jackals ran away. Panch-Phul Ranee did not forget their words. She, a princess born, who had never put her foot to the ground before (so delicately and tenderly had she been reared), walked over the rough clods of earth and the sharp stones till she reached the place where the tree grew of which the jackals had spoken. She gathered a number of its leaves, and, with hands and feet that had never before done coarse or common

work, beat and crushed them down. They were so stiff and strong that it took her a long time. At last, after tearing them, and stamping on them, and pounding them between two stones, and biting the hardest parts, she thought they were sufficiently crushed; and rolling them up in a corner of her saree, she squeezed the juice through it onto her husband's temples, and put a little on his upper lip and into his ears, and some also on the spear-wound in his side. And when she had done this, he awoke as if he had been only sleeping, and sat up, wondering where he was. Before him stood Panch-Phul Ranee shining like a glorious star, and all around them was the dark jungle.

It would be hard to say which of them was the most astonished — the Rajah or the Princess. She was surprised that the remedy should have taken such speedy effect, and could hardly believe her eyes when she saw her husband get up. And if he looked beautiful when dead, much more handsome did he seem to her now, so full of life and animation and power — the picture of health and strength. And he in his turn was lost in amazement at the exquisite loveliness of the lady who stood before him. He did not know who she could be, for he had never seen her like except in a dream. Could she be really the world-renowned Panch-Phul Ranee, or was he dreaming still? He feared to move lest he should break the spell. But as he sat there wondering, she spoke, saying, "You marvel at what has taken place. You do not know me — I am Panch-Phul Ranee, your wife."

Then he said, "Ah, Princess, is it indeed you? You

have been very hard to me." "I know, I know," she answered; "I caused your death, but I brought you to life again. Let the past be forgotten; come home with me, and my father and mother will welcome you as a son."

He replied, "No, I must first return to my own home a while. Do you rather return there now with me, for it is a long time since I left it, and afterward we will come again to your father's kingdom."

To this Panch-Phul Ranee agreed. It took them, however, a long time to find their way out of the jungle. At last they succeeded in doing so, for none of the wild animals in it attempted to injure them, so beautiful and royal did they both look.

When they reached the banyan tree, where the Rajah had left the two parrots, the old parrot called out to him, "So you have come back at last! We thought you never would, you were such a long time away! There you went, leaving us here all the time, and after all doing no good, but only getting yourself killed. Why did n't you do as we advised you, and jump up nicely?"

"Well, I'm sure," said the Rajah, "yours is a hard case; but I beg your pardon for keeping you waiting so long, and now I hope you'll take me and my wife home."

"Yes, we will do that," answered the parrots; "but you had better get some dinner first, for it's a long journey over the seven seas."

So the Rajah went to the village close by and bought food for himself and the Panch-Phul Ranee. When he

returned with it, he said to her, "I fear the long journey before us for you: had you not better let me make it alone, and return here for you when it is over?" But she answered, "No! what could I, a poor, weak woman, do here alone? and I will not return to my father's house till you can come too. Take me with you, however far you go; only promise me you will never leave me." So he promised her, and they both, mounting the parrots, were carried up in the air across the seven seas, across the Red Sea, on, on, on, a whole year's journey, until they reached his father's kingdom, and alighted to rest at the foot of the palace garden. The Rajah, however, did not know where he was, for all had much changed since he left it some years before.

Then a little son was born to the Rajah and Panch-Phul Ranee. He was a beautiful child, but his father was grieved to think that in that bleak place there was no shelter for the mother or the baby. So he said to his wife, "I will go to fetch food for us both, and fire to cook it with, and inquire what this country is, and seek out a place of rest for you. Do not be afraid; I shall soon return." Now, far off in the distance smoke was to be seen rising from tents which belonged to some conjurers and dancing-people, and thither the Rajah bent his steps, feeling certain he should be able to get fire, and perhaps food also, from the inhabitants. When he got there, he found the place was much larger than he had expected, — quite a good-sized village in fact, the abode of nautch people and conjurers. In all the houses the people were busy, some dancing, some singing, others trying various conjuring tricks

or practicing beating the drum, and all seemed happy and joyful.

When the conjurers saw him, they were so much struck with his appearance (for he was very handsome) that they determined to make him, if possible, stay among them and join their band. And they said one to another, "How well he would look beating the drum for the dancers! All the world would come to see us dance, if we had such a handsome man as that to beat the drum."

The Rajah, unconscious of their intentions, went into the largest hut he saw, and said to a woman who was grinding corn, "Bai, give me a little rice, and some fire from your hearth." She immediately consented, and got up to fetch the burning sticks he asked for; but before she gave them to him, she and her companions threw upon them a certain powder, containing a very potent charm; and no sooner did the Rajah receive them than he forgot about his wife and little child, his journey, and all that had ever happened to him in his life before; such was the peculiar property of the powder. And when the conjurers said to him, "Why should you go away? stay with us, and be one of us," he willingly consented to do so.

All this time Panch-Phul Ranee waited and waited for her husband, but he never came. Night approached without his having brought her any food or news of having found a place of shelter for her and the baby. At last, faint and weary, she swooned away.

It happened that that very day the Ranee (Panch-Phul Ranee's husband's mother) lost her youngest child, a fine

little boy of only a day old; and her servants took its body to the bottom of the garden to bury it. Just as they were going to do so, they heard a low cry, and, looking round, saw close by a beautiful woman lying on the ground, dead, or apparently so, and beside her a fine little baby boy. The idea immediately entered their heads of leaving the dead baby beside the dead woman, and taking her living baby back with them to the palace; and so they did.

When they returned, they said to their mistress, "Your child did not die; see, here it is — it got well again," and showed her Panch-Phul Ranee's baby; but after a time, when the Ranee questioned them about it, they told her the whole truth, but she had become meanwhile very fond of the little boy, and so he continued in the palace and was brought up as her son; being, in truth, her grandson, though she did not know it.

Meantime the palace Malee's wife went out, as her custom was every morning and evening, to gather flowers. In search of them she wandered as far as the jungle at the bottom of the garden, and there she found the Panch-Phul Ranee lying as dead, and the dead baby beside her.

The good woman felt very sorry, and rubbed the Ranee's cold hands and gave her sweet flowers to smell, in hopes that she might revive. At last she opened her eyes, and seeing the Malee's wife, said, "Where am I? has not my husband come back? and who are you?"

"My poor lady," answered the Malee's wife, "I do not know where your husband is. I am the Malee's wife, and coming here to gather flowers, I found you lying on

the ground, and this your little baby, which is dead; but come home with me, I will take care of you."

Panch-Phul Ranee answered, "Kind friend, this is not my baby; he did not die: he was the image of his father, and fairer than this child. Some one must have taken him away, for but a little while ago I held him in my arms, and he was strong and well, while this one could never have been more than a puny, weakly infant. Take me away; I will go home with you."

So the Malee's wife buried the dead child and took the Panch-Phul Ranee to her house, where she lived for fourteen years; but all that time she could learn no tidings of her husband or her lost little boy. The child, meanwhile, grew up in the palace, and became a very handsome youth. One day he was wandering round the garden and chanced to pass the Malee's house. The Panch-Phul Ranee was sitting within, watching the Malee's wife cook their dinner.

The young prince saw her, and calling the Malee's wife, said to her, "What beautiful lady is that in your house? and how did she come there?" She answered, "Little prince, what nonsense you talk! there is no lady here." He said again, "I know there is a beautiful lady here, for I saw her as I passed the open door." She replied, "If you come telling such tales about my house, I'll pull your tongue out." For she thought to herself, "Unless I scold him well, the boy'll go talking about what he's seen in the palace, and then perhaps some of the people from there will come and take the poor Panch-Phul Ranee away from my care." But whilst the Malee's wife was talking to the young Prince, the Panch-

Phul Ranee came from the inner room to watch and listen to him unobserved; and no sooner did she see him than she could not forbear crying out, "Oh, how like he is to my husband! The same eyes, the same shaped face, and the same king-like bearing! Can he be my son? He is just the age my son would have been had he lived."

The young prince heard her speaking and asked what she said, to which the Malee's wife replied, "The woman you saw, and who just now spoke, lost her child fourteen years ago, and she was saying to herself how like you were to that child, and thinking you must be the same; but she is wrong, for we know you are the Ranee's son." Then Panch-Phul Ranee herself came out of the house, and said to him, "Young prince, I could not, when I saw you, help exclaiming how like you are to what my lost husband was, and to what my son might have been; for it is now fourteen years since I lost them both." And she told him how she had been a great princess, and was returning with her husband to his own home (to which they had got halfway in reaching that place), and how her little baby had been born in the jungle, and her husband had gone away to seek shelter for her and the child, and fire and food, and had never returned; and also how, when she had fainted away, some one had certainly stolen her baby and left a dead child in its place; and how the good Malee's wife had befriended her, and taken her ever since to live in her house. And when she had ended her story she began to cry.

But the prince said to her, "Be of good cheer; I will endeavor to recover your husband and child for you: who knows but I may indeed be your son, beautiful

lady?" And running home to the Ranee (his adopted mother), he said to her, "Are you really my mother? Tell me truly; for this I must know before the sun goes down." "Why do you ask foolish questions?" she replied; "have I not always treated you as a son?" "Yes," he said; "but tell me the very truth, am I your own child, or the child of some one else, adopted as yours? If you do not tell me, I will kill myself." And so saying, he drew his sword. She replied, "Stay, stay, and I will tell you the whole truth: the day before you were born I had a little baby, but it died; and my servants took it to the bottom of the garden to bury it, and there they found a beautiful woman lying as dead, and beside her a living infant. You were that child. They brought you to the palace, and I adopted you as my son, and left my baby in your stead." "What became of my mother?" he asked. "I cannot tell," answered the Ranee; "for two days afterward, when I sent to the same place, she and the baby had both disappeared, and I have never since heard of her."

The young Prince, on hearing this, said, "There is in the head Malee's house a beautiful lady, whom the Malee's wife found in the jungle fourteen years ago; that must be my mother. Let her be received here this very day with all honor, for that is the only reparation that can now be made to her."

The Ranee consented, and the young prince went down to the Malee's house himself to fetch his mother to the palace.

With him he took a great retinue of people, and a beautiful palanquin for her to go in, covered with rich

trappings; also costly things for her to wear, and many jewels and presents for the good Malee's wife.

When Panch-Phul Ranee had put on her son's gifts, and come out of the Malee's poor cottage to meet him, all the people said there had never been so royal-looking a queen. As gold and clear crystal are lovely, as mother-of-pearl is exquisitely fair and delicate-looking, so beautiful, so fair, so delicate appeared Panch-Phul Ranee.

Her son conducted her with much pomp and state to the palace, and did all in his power to honor her; and there she lived long very happily, and beloved by all.

One day the young prince begged her to tell him again, from the beginning, the story of her life, and as much as she knew of his father's life; and so she did. And after that he said to her, "Be no longer sad, dear mother, regarding my father's fate; for I will send into all lands to gather tidings of him, and maybe in the end we shall find him." And he sent people out to hunt for the Rajah all over the kingdom, and in all neighboring countries, — to the north, to the south, to the east, and to the west, — but they found him not.

At last (after four years of unsuccessful search), when there seemed no hope of ever learning what had become of him, Panch-Phul Ranee's son came to see her, and said, "Mother, I have sent into all lands seeking my father, but can hear no news of him. If there were only the slightest clue as to the direction in which he went, there would still be some chance of tracing him, but that, I fear, cannot be got. Do you not remember his having said anything of the way which he intended to go when he left you?" She answered, "When your father went

away, his words to me were, 'I will go to fetch food for us both, and fire to cook it with, and inquire what this country is, and seek out a place of shelter for you. Do not be afraid — I shall soon return.' That was all he said, and then he went away, and I never saw him more."

"In what direction did he go from the foot of the garden?" asked the prince. "He went," answered the Panch-Phul Ranee, "toward that village of conjurers close by. I thought he was intending to ask some of them to give us food. But had he done so, he would certainly have returned in a very short time."

"Do you think you should know my father, mother darling, if you were to see him again?" asked the prince. "Yes," answered she, "I should know him again." "What!" he said, "even though eighteen years have gone by since you saw him last? Even though age and sickness and want had done their utmost to change him?" "Yes!" she replied; "his every feature is so impressed on my heart that I should know him again anywhere or in any disguise."

"Then let us," he said, "send for all those people in the direction of whose houses he went away. Maybe they have detained him among them to this day. It is but a chance, but we can hope for nothing more certain."

So the Panch-Phul Ranee and her son sent down orders to the conjurers' village that every one of the whole band should come up to the palace that afternoon — not a soul was to stay behind. And the dancers were to dance and the conjurers to play all their tricks for the amusement of the palace inmates.

The people came. The nautch girls began to dance — running, jumping, and flying here, there, and everywhere, some up, some down, some round and round. The conjurers conjured, and all began in different ways to amuse the company. Among the rest was one wild, ragged-looking man, whose business was to beat the drum. No sooner did the Panch-Phul Ranee set eyes on him than she said to her son, "Boy, that is your father!" "What, mother!" he said, "that wretched-looking man who is beating the drum?" "The same," she answered.

The prince said to his servants, "Fetch that man here." And the Rajah came toward them, so changed that not even his own mother knew him — no one recognized him but his wife. For eighteen years he had been among the nautch people; his hair was rough, his beard untrimmed, his face thin and worn, sunburnt and wrinkled; he wore a nose-ring and heavy ear-rings such as the nautch people have; and his dress was a rough, common cumlee. All traces of his former self seemed to have disappeared. They asked him if he did not remember he had been a Rajah once, and about his journey to Panch-Phul Ranee's country. But he said, No, he remembered nothing but how to beat the drum — Rub-a-dub! tat-tat! tom-tum! tom-tum! He thought he must have beaten it all his life.

Then the young prince gave orders that all the nautch people should be put into jail until it could be discovered what part they had taken in reducing his father to so pitiable a state. And sending for the wisest doctors in the kingdom, he said to them, "Do your best and restore the health of this Rajah, who has to all appear-

ance lost both memory and reason; and discover, if possible, what has caused these misfortunes to befall him." The doctors said, "He has certainly had some potent charm given to him, which has destroyed both his memory and reason, but we will do our best to counteract its influence."

And so they did. And their treatment succeeded so well that, after a time, the Rajah entirely recovered his former senses. And they took such good care of him that in a little while he regained his health and strength also, and looked almost as well as ever.

He then found to his surprise that he, Panch-Phul Ranee, and their son had all this time been living in his father's kingdom. His father was so delighted to see him again that he was no longer unkind to him, but treated him as a dearly beloved, long-lost son. His mother also was overjoyed at his return, and they said to him, "Since you have been restored to us again, why should you wander any more? Your wife and son are here; do you also remain here, and live among us for the rest of your days." But he replied, "I have another wife — the carpenter's daughter — who first was kind to me in my adopted country. I also have there nine hundred and ninety-eight talking wooden parrots, which I greatly prize. Let me first go and fetch them."

They said, "Very well; go quickly and then return." So he mounted the two wooden parrots which had brought him from the Panch-Phul Ranee's country (and which had for eighteen years lived in the jungle close to the palace), and returned to the land where

his first wife lived, and fetched her and the nine hundred and ninety-eight remaining wooden parrots to his father's kingdom. Then his father said to him, "Don't have any quarreling with your half-brother after I am dead" (for his half-brother was son of the old Rajah's favorite wife). "I love you both dearly, and will give each of you half of my kingdom." So he divided the kingdom into two halves, and gave the one half to the Panch-Phul Ranee's husband, who was the son of his first wife, and the other half to the eldest son of his second but favorite wife.

A short time after this arrangement was made, Panch-Phul Ranee said to her husband, "I wish to see my father and mother again before I die; let me go and see them." He answered, "You shall go, and I and our son will also go." So he called four of the wooden parrots — two to carry himself and the Ranee, and two to carry their son. Each pair of parrots crossed their wings; the young prince sat upon the two wings of one pair, and on the wings of the other pair sat his father and mother. Then they all rose up in the air, and the parrots carried them (as they had before carried the Rajah alone) up, up, up, on, on, on, over the Red Sea, and across the seven seas, until they reached the Panch-Phul Ranee's country.

Panch-Phul Ranee's father saw them come flying through the air as quickly as shooting stars, and much wondering who they were, he sent out many of his nobles and chief officers to inquire.

The nobles went out to meet them, and called out, "What great Rajah is this who is dressed so royally

and comes flying through the air so fast? Tell us, that we may tell our Rajah."

The Rajah answered, "Go and tell your master that this is Panch-Phul Ranee's husband, come to visit his father-in-law." So they took that answer back to the palace; but when the Rajah heard it, he said, "I cannot tell what this means, for the Panch-Phul Ranee's husband died long ago. It is twenty years since he fell upon the iron spears and died; let us, however, all go and discover who this great Rajah really is." And he and all his court went out to meet the newcomers just as the parrots had alighted close to the palace gate. The Panch-Phul Ranee took her son by the one hand and her husband by the other, and walking to meet her father, said, "Father, I have come to see you again. This is my husband who died, and this boy is my son." Then all the land was glad to see the Panch-Phul Ranee back, and the people said, "Our princess is the most beautiful princess in the world, and her husband is as handsome as she is, and her son is a fair boy; we will that they should always live among us and reign over us."

When they had rested a little, the Panch-Phul Ranee told her father and mother the story of all her adventures from the time she and her husband were left in the palkees in the jungle. And when they had heard it, her father said to the Rajah, her husband, "You must never go away again; for see, I have no son but you. You and your son must reign here after me. And behold all this great kingdom will I now give you, if you will only stay with us; for I am old and weary of governing the land."

But the Rajah answered, "I must return once again to my own country, and then I will stay with you as long as I live."

So, leaving the Panch-Phul Ranee and her son with the old Rajah and Ranee, he mounted his parrots and once more returned to his father's land. And when he had reached it, he said to his mother, "Mother, my father-in-law has given me a kingdom ten thousand times larger than this. So I have but returned to bid you farewell and fetch my first wife, and then I must go back to live in that other land." She answered, "Very well; so you are happy anywhere, I am happy too."

He then said to his half-brother, "Brother, my father-in-law has given me all the Panch-Phul Ranee's country, which is very far away; therefore I give up to you the half of this kingdom that my father gave to me." Then bidding his father farewell, he took the carpenter's daughter back with him (riding through the air on two of the wooden parrots, and followed by the rest) to the Panch-Phul Ranee's country, and there he and his two wives and his son lived very happily all their mortal days.

CHANDRA'S VENGEANCE

By M. Frere

THERE was once a Sowkar's wife who had no children; one day she went crying to her husband and saying, "What an unhappy woman I am to have no children! If I had any children to amuse me I should be quite happy." He answered, "Why should you be miserable on that account; though you have no children, your sister has eight or nine; why not adopt one of hers?" The Sowkar's wife agreed, and, adopting one of her sister's little boys, who was only six months old, brought him up as her own son. Some time afterward, when the child was one day returning from school, he and one of his schoolfellows quarreled and began to fight, and the other boy (being much the older and stronger of the two) gave him a great blow on the head and knocked him down, and hurt him very much. The boy ran crying home, and the Sowkar's wife bathed his head and bandaged it up, but she did not send and punish the boy who hurt him, for she thought, "One can't keep children shut up always in the house, and they will be fighting together sometimes and hurting themselves." Then the child grumbled to himself, saying, "This is only my aunt; that is why she did not punish the other boy. If she had been my mother, she would certainly have given him a great knock on his

head to punish him for knocking mine, but because she is only my aunt, I suppose she does n't care." The Sowkar's wife overheard him, and felt very much grieved, saying, "This little child, whom I have watched over from his babyhood, does not love me as if I were his mother. It is of no use; he is not my own, and he will never care for me as such." So she took him home to his own mother, saying, "Sister, I have brought you back your child." "How is this?" asked her sister. "You adopted him as yours for all his life. Why do you now bring him back?" The Sowkar's wife did not tell her sister what she had heard the boy say, but she answered, "Very well, let him be yours and mine: he shall live a while with you, and then come and visit me; we will both take care of him." And returning to her husband, she told him what she had done, saying, "All my pains are useless; you know how kind I have been to my sister's boy, yet after all I have done for him, at the end of seven years he does not love me as well as he does his mother, whom he had scarcely seen. Now, therefore, I will never rest until I have seen Mahdeo and asked him to grant that I may have a child of my own."

"What a foolish woman you are!" answered her husband; "why not be content with your lot? How do you think you will find Mahdeo? Do you know the road to heaven?" "Nay," she replied, "but I will seek for it until I find it out, and if I never find it, it cannot be helped, but I will return home no more unless my prayer is answered." So she left the house, and wandered into the jungle, and after she had trav-

eled through it for many, many days, and left her own land very far behind, she came to the borders of another country, even the Madura Tinivelly country, where a great river rolled down toward the sea. On the river-bank sat two women — a Ranee named Coplinghee Ranee and a nautch woman.

Now, neither the Ranee, the nautch woman, nor the Sowkar's wife had ever seen each other before they met at the river-side. Then, as they sat down to rest and drink some of the water, the Ranee turned to the Sowkar's wife and said to her, "Who are you, and where are you going?" She answered, "I am a Sowkar's wife from a far country, and because I was very unhappy at having no children, I am going to find Mahdeo and ask him to grant that I may have a child of my own."

Then in her turn she said to the Ranee, "And pray who are you, and where are you going?" The Ranee answered, "I am Coplinghee Ranee, queen of all this country, but neither money nor riches can give me joy, for I have no children; I therefore am going to seek Mahdeo and ask him to grant that I may have a child." Then Coplinghee Ranee asked the nautch woman the same question, saying, "And who may you be, and where are you going?" The nautch woman answered, "I am a dancing woman and I also have no children, and am going to seek Mahdeo and pray to him for a child." At hearing this, the Sowkar's wife said, "Since we are all journeying on the same errand, why should we not go together?" To this Coplinghee Ranee and the dancing woman agreed, so they all three continued their journey together through the jungle.

On, on, on they went, every day farther and farther; they never stayed to rest nor saw another human being. Their feet ached dreadfully and their clothes wore out, and they had nothing to live on but the jungle plants, wild berries, and seeds. So weary and worn did they become that they looked like three poor old beggar women. Never had they by night-time sleep nor by day-time rest; and so, hour after hour, month after month, year after year, they traveled on.

At last one day they came to where, in the midst of the jungle, there rolled a great river of fire. It was the biggest river they had ever seen, and made of flames instead of water. There was no one on this side and no one on that, — no way of getting across but by walking through the fire.

When Coplinghee Ranee and the nautch woman saw this, they said, "Alas! here is the end of all our pains and trouble. All hope is over, for we can go no farther." But the Sowkar's wife answered, "Shall we be deterred by this after having come so far? Nay, rather seek a way across the fire." And so saying, she stepped into the fire waves; the others, however, were afraid, and would not go. When the Sowkar's wife had half crossed the river of fire, she turned, and waving her hands toward them, said, "Come on, come on, do not be afraid. The fire does not burn me. I go to find Mahdeo; perhaps he is on the other side." But they still refused, saying, "We cannot come, but we will wait here until your return; and if you find Mahdeo, pray for us also, that we may have children."

So the Sowkar's wife went on her way, and the fire-

waves lapped round her feet as if they had been water, but they did not hurt her.

When she reached the other side of the river she came upon a great wilderness, full of wild elephants and buffaloes and lions and tigers and bears, that roared and growled on every side. But she did not turn back for fear of them, for she said to herself, "I can but die once, and it is better that they should kill me than that I should return without finding Mahdeo." And all the wild beasts allowed her to pass through the midst of them and did her no harm.

Now it came to pass that Mahdeo looked down from heaven and saw her, and when he saw her he pitied her greatly, for she had been twelve years wandering upon the face of the earth to find him. Then he caused a beautiful mango tree, beside a fair well, to spring up in the desert to give her rest and refreshment, and he himself, in the disguise of a Gosain fakeer, came and stood by the tree. But the Sowkar's wife would not stay to gather the fruit or drink the water; she did not so much as notice the fakeer, but walked straight on in her weary search for Mahdeo. Then he called after her, "Bai, Bai, where are you going? Come here." She answered, scarcely looking at him, "It matters not to you, fakeer, where I am going. You tell your prayer-beads and leave me alone." "Come here," he cried; "come here." But she would not, so Mahdeo went and stood in front of her, no longer disguised as a fakeer, but shining brightly, the Lord of Kylas in all his beauty; and at the sight of him the poor Sowkar's wife fell down on the ground and kissed his feet, and

he said to her, "Tell me, Bai, where are you going?" She answered, "Sir, I seek Mahdeo, to pray him to grant that I may have a child, but for twelve years I have looked for him in vain." He said, "Seek no farther, for I am Mahdeo; take this mango," and he gathered one off the tree that grew by the well, "and eat it, and it shall come to pass that when you return home you shall have a child." Then she said, "Sir, three women came seeking you, but two stayed by the river of fire, for they were afraid; may not they also have children?"

"If you will," he answered, "you may give them some of your mango, and then they also will each have a child."

So saying, he faded from her sight, and the Sowkar's wife returned glad and joyful, through the wilderness and the river of fire, to where the Ranee and the dancing woman were waiting for her on the other side. When they saw her, they said, "Well, Sowkar's wife, what news?" She answered, "I have found Mahdeo, and he has given me this mango, of which if we eat we shall each have a child." And she took the mango, and squeezing it gave the juice to the Ranee, and the skin she gave to the nautch woman, and the pulp and the stone she ate herself.

Then these three women returned to their own homes, — Coplinghee Ranee and the dancing woman to the Madura Tinivelly country, and the Sowkar's wife to very, very far beyond that, even the land where her husband lived, and whence she had first started on her journey.

But on their return all their friends only laughed at them, and the Sowkar said to his wife, "I cannot see much good in your mad twelve years' journey; you only come back looking like a beggar, and all the world laughs at you."

"I don't care," she answered; "I have seen Mahdeo and eaten of the mango, and I shall have a child."

And within a little while it came to pass that there was born to the Sowkar and his wife a little son, and on the very same day Coplinghee Ranee had a daughter and the nautch woman had a daughter.

Then were they all very happy, and sent everywhere to tell their friends the good news; and each gave, according to her power, a great feast to the poor as a thank-offering to Mahdeo, who had been merciful to them. And the Sowkar's wife called her son "Koila," in memory of the mango stone; and the nautch woman called her daughter "Moulec;" and the little princess was named Chandra Bai, for she was as fair and beautiful as the white moon.

Chandra Ranee was very beautiful, the most beautiful child in all that country, so pretty and delicately made that everybody who saw her loved her. She was born, moreover, with two of the most costly anklets on her ankles, that ever were seen. They were made of gold and very precious stones, dazzling to look at, like the sun. No one had ever seen any like them before. Every day, as the baby grew, these bangles grew, and round them were little bells, which tinkled when any one came near. Chandra's parents were very happy and proud, and sent for all the wise

men in the kingdom to tell her fortune. But the most learned Brahmin of them all, when he saw her, said, "This child must be sent out of the country at once, for if she stays in it she will destroy all the land with fire and burn it utterly."

The Rajah, at hearing these words, was very angry, and said to the Brahmin, "I will cut off your head, for you tell lies and not the truth." The Brahmin answered, "Cut off my head if you will, but it is the truth I speak, and no lie. If you do not believe me, let a little wool be fetched, and put it upon the child, that you may know my words are true."

So they fetched some wool and laid it upon the baby, and no sooner had they done so than it all blazed up and burnt till not a bit was left, and it scorched the hands of the attendants.

Then the Brahmin said, "As this fire has burnt the wool, so will this princess one day, if she comes here, burn this whole land." And they were all very much frightened, and the Rajah said to the Ranee, "This being so, the child must be sent out of the country instantly." The poor Ranee thereat was very sad, and she did all in her power to save her little baby, but the Rajah would not hear of it, and commanded that the princess should be placed in a large box, and taken to the borders of his land, where a great river rolled down to the sea, and there thrown into the stream, that it might carry her far, far away, each minute farther from her native land. Then the Ranee caused a beautiful golden box to be made, and put her little baby in it with many tears (since all her efforts

to save it were of no avail), and it was taken away and thrown into the river.

The box floated on, and on, and on, until at last it reached the country where the Sowkar and the Sowkar's wife lived. Now it chanced that, just as the box was floating by, the Sowkar, who had gone down to the river to wash his face, caught sight of it; and seeing a fisherman not far off prepared to throw his net into the water, he cried, "Run, fisherman, run, run! do not stop to fish, but cast your net over that glittering box and bring it here to me!"

"I will not, unless you promise me that the box shall be mine," said the fisherman. "Very well," answered the Sowkar, "the box shall be yours, and whatever it contains shall belong to me."

So the fisherman cast his net in that part of the river and dragged the box ashore.

I don't know which was more astonished — the merchant or the fisherman — when they saw what a prize they had found. For the box was composed entirely of gold and precious stones, and within it lay the most lovely little child that ever was seen.

She seemed a little princess, for her dress was all made of cloth of gold, and on her feet were two anklets that shone like the sun.

When the Sowkar opened the box, she smiled, and stretched out her little arms toward him. Then he was pleased, and said, "Fisherman, the box is yours, but this child must belong to me." The fisherman was content that it should be so, for he had many children of his own at home, and wanted no more,

but was glad to have the golden box; while the Sowkar, who had only his one little son and was rich, did not care for the box, but was well pleased to have the baby.

He took her home to his wife, and said, "See, wife, here is a pretty little daughter-in-law for us. Here is a wife for your little son." And when the Sowkar's wife saw the child looking so beautiful and smiling so sweetly, her heart was glad and she loved her, and from that day took the greatest care of her, just as if the baby girl had been her own daughter. And when Chandra Ranee was a year old they married her to their son, Koila.

Years wore on, and the Sowkar and his wife were in a good old age gathered to their fathers. Meantime, Koila and Chandra had grown up the handsomest couple in all the country: Koila tall and straight, with a face like a young lion, and Chandra as lithe and graceful as a palm tree, with a face calm and beautiful like the silver moonlight.

Meantime Moulee, the nautch woman's daughter (and third of the mango children), had likewise grown up in the Madura Tinivelly country, and was also very fair — fairer than any one in all the land around. Moreover, she danced and sang more beautifully than any of the other nautch girls. Her voice was clear as the voice of a quail, and it rang through the air with such power that the sound could be heard a twelve days' journey off. The nautch people used to travel about from place to place, staying one day in one town and the next in another, and so it happened

that in their wanderings they reached the borders of the land where Koila and Chandra lived.

One morning Koila heard the sound of singing in the distance, and it pleased him so well that he determined to try and discover who it was that possessed such an exquisite voice. For twelve days he journeyed on through the jungle, each day hearing the singing repeated louder and louder, yet still without reaching the place whence it came. At last, on the twelfth day, he got close to the nautch people's encampment, not far from a large town, and there saw the singer (who was none other than Moulee), singing and dancing in the midst of a great crowd of people who had collected around her. In her hand she held a garland of flowers, which she waved over her head as she danced.

Koila was so charmed with the sound of her voice that he felt spellbound, and stood where he was, far off on the outskirts of the jungle, listening, without going any nearer.

When the entertainment was over, all the people crowded round Moulee, saying, "Why should you, who have such a beautiful voice, go away and leave our city? Marry one of us, and then you will stay here always." Then, the number of her suitors being so great that she did not know whom to choose, she said, "Very well; he on whose neck this garland falls shall be my husband." And waving the flowers she held two or three times round her head, she threw them from her with her utmost force.

The impetus given to the garland was so great that

it swung through the air beyond the crowd and fell upon the neck of Koila as he stood by the borders of the jungle. And the people ran to see who was the fortunate possessor, and when they saw Koila they were astonished, for he looked more beautiful than any of the sons of men: it was as if an immortal had suddenly come among them. And the nautch people dragged him back to their camp, crying, "You have won the garland; you must be Moulee's husband." He answered, "I only came here to look on; I cannot stay. This is not my country; I have a wife of my own at home." "That is nothing to us," they said; "it is your destiny to marry Moulee — Moulee the beautiful one — Moulee, whose voice you heard and who dances so well. You must marry her, for the garland fell on you."

Now so it was that though Koila was very kind to his wife, he did not love her as well as she loved him (perhaps it was that, having been accustomed to her from a child, Chandra's goodness and beauty struck him less than it did other people); and instead of thinking how unhappy she would be if he did not return, and going back at once, he stopped and hesitated and debated what to do. And the nautch people gave him a drink that was a very powerful spell, insomuch that he soon totally forgot about his own home, and was married to Moulee, the nautch girl, and lived among the nautch people for many months. At last, one day, Moulee's mother (the very nautch woman who had gone with Coplinghee Ranee and the Sowkar's wife to find Mahdeo) said to Koila, "Son-in-law, you are a lazy

fellow; you have been here now for a long time, but you do nothing for your support; it is we who have to pay for your food, we who have to provide your clothes. Go now and fetch us some money, or I will turn you out of the house, and you shall never see your wife Moulee again." Koila had no money to give his mother-in-law: then for the first time he bethought him of his own country and of Chandra, and he said, "My first wife, who lives in my own country, has on her feet two bangles of very great value; let me return home and fetch one of them to sell, which will more than pay whatever I owe you." The nautch people consented. So Koila returned to his own home, and told Chandra what he wanted the money for, and asked her to let him have one of her bangles; but she refused, saying, "You have been away a long, long time, and left me all alone, and chosen for your second wife one of the nautch people, and become one of them; and now you want to take one of my bangles — the bangles that I had when a little child, that have grown with my growth, and never been taken off — and to give it to your other wife. This shall not be; go back, if you will, to your new friends, but I will not give you my bangle."

He answered, "They gave me an enchanted drink which made me forget you for a time, but I am weary of them all; let me but go and pay my mother-in-law the money I owe her for food and clothes, and I will return and live in my own land, for you are my first wife."

"Very well," she said, "you may take the bangle and sell it, and give the money to your second wife's

mother, but take me also with you when you go; do not leave me here all alone again." Koila agreed, and they both set off together toward the Madura Tinivelly country.

As they journeyed, Krishnaswami, who was playing at cards with his three wives, saw them, and when he saw them he laughed. Then his wives said to him, "Why do you laugh? You have not laughed for such a long time: what amuses you so much now?" He answered, "I am laughing to see Koila and his wife Chandra Ranee journeying toward the Madura Tinivelly country. He is going to sell his wife's bangle, and he will only be killed, and then she in anger will burn up all the country. O foolish people!" The goddesses answered, "This is a very dreadful thing; let us go in disguise and warn him not to enter the country." "It would be useless," said Krishnaswami; "if you do, he will only laugh at you and get angry with you." But the goddesses determined to do their best to avert the threatened calamity. So they disguised themselves as old fortune-tellers, and went out with little lamps and their sacred books to meet Koila as he came along the road, followed by his wife. Then they said to him, "Come not into the Madura Tinivelly country, for if you come you will be killed, and your wife in her fury will burn all the land with fire." At first Koila would not listen to them; then he bade them go away; and lastly, when they continued warning him, got angry and beat them out of his path, saying, "Do you think I am to be frightened out of the country by a parcel of old crones like you?"

Then Krishnaswami's three wives returned to him, much enraged at the treatment they had received; but he only said to them, "Did I not tell you not to go, warning you that it would be useless?"

On getting near the Rajah's capital, Koila and Chandra came to the house of an old milk-seller, who was very kind to them and gave them food and shelter for the night. Next morning Koila said to his wife, "You had better stay here; this good old woman will take care of you while I go into the town to sell your bangle." Chandra agreed, and remained at the old woman's house while her husband went into the town. Of course he did not know that the Rajah and his wife (the Coplinghee Ranee) were Chandra's father and mother, any more than they or Chandra herself knew it, or than the three mango children knew the story of their mothers' journey in search of Mahdeo.

Now a short time before Koila and Chandra reached the Madura Tinivelly country, Coplinghee Ranee had sent a very handsome pair of bangles to a jeweler in the town to be cleaned. It chanced that in a high tree close to the jeweler's house two eagles had built their nest, and the young eagles, who were very noisy birds, used to scream all day long and greatly disturb the jeweler's family. So one day, when the old birds were away, the jeweler's son climbed up the tree and pulled down the nest, and put the young eagles to death. When the old birds returned home and saw what was done, it grieved them very much, and they said, "These cruel people have killed our children; let us punish them." And seeing in the porch one of Coplinghee

Ranee's beautiful bangles, which the jeweler had just been cleaning, they swooped down and flew away with it.

The jeweler did not know what to do. He said to his wife, "To buy such a bangle as that would cost more than all our fortune, and to make one like it would take many, many years; I dare not say I have lost it, or they would think I had stolen it and would put me to death. The only thing I can do is to delay returning the other as long as possible, and try somehow to get one like it." So next day, when the Ranee sent to inquire if her bangles were ready, he answered, "They are not ready yet; they will be ready to-morrow." And the next day and the next he said the same thing. At last the Ranee's messengers got very angry at the continued delays; then, seeing he could no longer make excuses, the jeweler sent the one bangle by them to the palace, beautifully cleaned, with a message that the other also would shortly be ready; but all this time he was hunting for a bangle costly enough to take the Ranee as a substitute for the one the eagles had carried away. Such a bangle, however, he could not find.

When Koila reached the town, he spread out a sheet in the corner of a street near the market-place, and, placing the bangle upon it, sat down close by, waiting for customers. Now he was very, very handsome. Although dressed so plainly, he looked like a prince, and the bangle he had to sell flashed in the morning light like seven suns. Such a handsome youth and such a beautiful bangle the people had never seen before; and many passers-by, with chattees on their heads,

let the chattees tumble down and break for watching him, they were so much astonished; and several men and women who were looking out of the windows of their houses, leaned too far forward and fell into the street, so giddy did they become from wonder and amazement!

But no one could be found to buy the bangle, for they all said, "We could not afford to buy such jewels; this bangle is fit only for a Ranee to wear." At last, when the day had nearly gone, who should come by but the jeweler who had been employed to clean Coplinghee Ranee's bangles, and was in search of one to replace that which the eagles had stolen. No sooner did he see the one belonging to Chandra, which Koila was trying to sell, than he said to himself, "That is the very thing I want, if I can only get it." So he called his wife, and said to her, "Go to that bangle-seller and speak kindly to him; say that the day is nearly gone, and invite him to come and lodge at our house for the night. For if we can make friends with him and get him to trust us, I shall be able to take the bangle from him and say he stole it from me. And as he is a stranger here, every one will believe my word rather than his. This bangle is exactly the very thing for me to take Coplinghee Ranee, for it is very like her own, only more beautiful."

The jeweler's wife did as she was told, and then the jeweler himself went up to Koila and said to him, "You are a bangle-seller, and I am a bangle-seller; therefore I look upon you as a brother. Come home, I pray you, with us, as my wife begs you to do, and we

will give you food and shelter for the night, since you are a stranger in this country." So these cunning people coaxed Koila to go home with them, and pretended to be very kind to him, and gave him supper, and a bed to rest on for the night; but next morning early the jeweler raised a hue and cry and sent for the police, and bade them take Koila before the Rajah instantly, since he had stolen and tried to sell one of Coplinghee Ranee's bangles, which he (the jeweler) had been given to clean. It was in vain that Koila protested his innocence, and declared that the bangle he had belonged to his wife; he was a stranger — nobody would believe him. They dragged him to the palace, and the jeweler accused him to the Rajah, saying, "This man tried to steal the Ranee's bangle (which I had been given to clean) and to sell it. If he had done so, you would have thought I had stolen it, and killed me; I demand, therefore, that he in punishment shall be put to death."

Then they sent for the Ranee to show her the bangle, but as soon as she saw it she recognized it as one of the bangles which had belonged to Chandra, and burst into tears, crying, "This is not my bangle. Oh, my lord, no jeweler on earth made this bangle! See, it is different from mine; and when any one comes near it, it tinkles and all the little bells begin to ring. Have you forgotten it? This was my beauty's bangle! My diamond's! My little darling's! My lost child's! Where did it come from? How did it come here? How into this land, and into this town and bazaar, among these wicked people? For this jeweler must have kept my

bangle and brought this one in its place. No human goldsmith's hands made this, for it is none other than Chandra's." Then she begged the Rajah to inquire further about it.

But they all thought her mad; and the jeweler said, "It is the Ranee's fancy, for this is the same bangle she gave me to clean." The other people also agreed that both the bangles were almost exactly alike, and must be a pair; and it being certain that Koila had had the bangle when he was seized by the police, the Rajah ordered him to be instantly executed. But the Ranee took Chandra's bangle and locked it away in a strong cupboard, apart from all her other jewels.

Then they took Koila out into the jungle and would have cut off his head, but he said to his guards, "If I must die, let me die by my own hands," and drawing his sword he fell upon it; and as the sword was very sharp it cut his body in two—one half fell on one side of the sword, and the other half on the other side—and they left his body where it fell.

When the news of what had taken place came to the town, many people who had seen Koila selling his bangle the day before began to murmur, saying, "There must be some injustice here—the Rajah has been over-hasty. Most likely the poor man did not steal the bangle. It is not likely that he would have tried to sell it openly before us all in the bazaar if it had been stolen property. How cruel of the Rajah to put such a handsome, gentle, noble-looking youth to death!—and he was a stranger, too!" And many wept at thought of his hard fate. When the Rajah heard of this

he was very angry, and sent and commanded that the matter should be no further discussed in the town, saying, "If any one speaks another word of what has been done, or laments or sheds tears for the dead, he shall be instantly hanged." Then the people all felt much frightened, and not a soul dared to speak of Koila, though every one thought about him.

Early the very morning that this happened the old milk-seller (at whose house, which was a little out of the town, Chandra had been sleeping) took her guest a bowl full of milk to drink: but no sooner had Chandra tasted it than she began to cry, saying, "Good mother, what have you done? my mouth is full of blood!" "No, no, my daughter," answered the old woman: "you must have been dreaming some bad dream. See, this is pure, fresh, warm milk I have brought you: drink again." But when Chandra tasted it for the second time, she answered, "Oh, no! oh no! it is not milk that I taste, but blood. All last night I had a dreadful dream, and this morning when I woke I found that my marriage necklace had snapped in two: and now this milk tastes to me as blood. Let me go! let me go! for I know my husband is dead."

The old woman tried to comfort her, saying, "Why should you fancy he is dead? he was quite well yesterday, when he went to sell your bangle; and he said he would come back to you soon: in a little while, very likely, he will be here." But she answered, "No, no: I feel sure that he is dead! Oh, let me go! for I must find him before I die." Then the old woman said, "You must not go: you are too beautiful to run

about through the streets of this strange town alone, and your husband would be very angry if he saw you doing so; and who knows but that you might lose your way, and get carried off as a slave; remember, he told you to stay here till he returned. Be patient; remain where you are, and I will go quickly into the town and seek your husband. If he is alive, I will bring him back to you, and if he is dead I will bring you word." So, taking a chattee full of milk on her head, as if to sell, she went to the town to find Koila, while every minute seemed an hour to Chandra until her return.

When the old milk-seller reached the town, she went up and down all the streets looking for Koila, or expecting to hear some one mention the handsome stranger who had gone to sell such a wonderful bangle the day before. But she could not find him, nor did she hear him spoken of, for all were afraid to say a word about him on account of the Rajah's decree. Being unable to trace him, the old woman got suspicious, and began to search, more carefully than before, down all the streets near the market-place, where she thought he was most likely to have gone; but, lest people should wonder at her errand, she called out each time as if she had some different thing to sell. First, "Buy some milk — who'll buy milk — who'll buy?" Then, on going for a second time down the same street, "Buy butter — butter! very fine butter!" and so on. At last one woman, who had been watching her with some curiosity, said, "Old woman, what nonsense you talk! you have been half a dozen times up and down this

same street, as if you had half a dozen different things to sell in that one chattee. Any one would think you had as little sense as that pretty young bangle-seller yesterday, who spent all the day trying to sell a bangle, and got put to death for his pains."

"Of whom do you speak?" asked the old woman. "Oh," said the other, "I suppose, as you're a milk-seller from the country, you know nothing about it. But that's not to be talked about, for the Rajah has said that whoever speaks of him or mourns him shall be instantly hanged. Ah, he was very handsome."

"Where is he now?" whispered the old woman. "There," answered the other; "you can see the place where that crowd of people has collected. The Rajah's jeweler accused him of having stolen the bangle; so he was executed, many thought unjustly; but do not say I said it." And so saying, she pointed toward the jungle some way off. The old woman ran to the place, but when she there saw two halves of Koila's body lying side by side, stiff and cold, she threw her earthen chattee down on the ground and fell on her knees, crying bitterly. The noise attracted the attention of the Rajah's guards, some of whom immediately seized her, saying, "Old woman, it is against the law to lament that dead man or murmur at the Rajah's decree; you deserve to be put to death." But she answered quickly, "The dead man! I do not cry for the dead man: can you not see that my chattee is broken and all the milk spilt? Is it not enough to make one weep?" And she began to cry again. "Hush! hush!" they answered; "don't cry! Come, the chattee was n't worth much; it was only

an earthen thing. Stop your tears, and maybe we'll give you a chattee of gold."

"I care neither for your golden chattees nor for silver," she said angrily. "Go away; go away! my earthen chattee was worth them all. My grandfather's grandfather and my grandmother's grandmother used this chattee; and to think that it should now be broken and all the milk spilt!" And picking up the broken pieces, she went home sobbing, as if the loss of her chattee was all her grief. But when she got to her own house, she ran in to where Chandra was, crying, "Alas! my pretty child! alas, my daughter! your fears are true!" and as gently as she could she told her what had happened.

No sooner did Chandra hear it than she ran away straight to the Rajah's palace in the midst of the town, and rushing into the room where he was, said, "How did you dare to kill my husband?"

Now, at the sound of her voice, her bangle, which the Ranee had locked up in the cupboard, broke through all the intervening doors and rolled to Chandra's feet.

The Rajah was unable to answer her a word. Then she fell on her knees and rent her clothes and tore her hair; and when she tore it all the land began to burn and all her hair burned too.

Then the old milk-seller, who had followed her, ran and put a lump of butter on her head, thinking to cool it, and two other women, who were by, fetched water to pour upon her hair, but by this time nineteen lines of houses were in flames. Then the old woman cried, "Oh, spare the Pruwari lines; don't burn them

down, for I did all I could for you." So Chandra did not burn that part of the town near which the old woman and her friends lived. But the fire burnt on and on in the other direction; and it killed the Rajah and the Ranee and all the people in the palace, and the wicked jeweler and his wife; and as he was dying Chandra tore out his heart and gave it to the eagles who hovered overhead, saying, "Here is vengeance for the death of your little ones." And the nautch girl, Moulee, and her mother, who were watching the fire from far off, were smothered in the flames.

Then Chandra went to where Koila's dead body lay and wept over it bitterly; and as she was weeping, there fell down to her from heaven a needle and thread; and she took them, saying, "Oh, that I could by any means restore you!" and placing the two halves of his body side by side, she sewed them together.

And when she had done this, she cried to Mahdeo, saying, "Sire, I have done the best I can; I have joined the body; give it life." And as she said these words Mahdeo had pity on her, and he sent Koila's spirit back, and it returned to his body again. Then Chandra was glad, and they returned and lived in their own land.

But to this day in the Madura Tinivelly country you can trace where all the land was burnt.

END OF VOLUME II